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THE  
ART OF PREACHING,  
AND THE  
COMPOSITION OF SERMONS.

## The Consecration.

"THEN SAID I, WOE IS ME! FOR I AM UNDONE; BECAUSE I AM A MAN OF UNCLEAN LIPS, AND I DWELL IN THE MIDST OF A PEOPLE OF UNCLEAN LIPS: FOR MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE KING, THE LORD OF HOSTS.

"THEN FLEW ONE OF THE SERAPHIMS UNTO ME, HAVING A LIVE COAL IN HIS HAND, WHICH HE HAD TAKEN WITH THE TONGS FROM OFF THE ALTAR:

"AND HE LAID IT UPON MY MOUTH, AND SAID, LO, THIS HATH TOUCHED THY LIPS; AND THINE INIQUITY IS TAKEN AWAY, AND THY SIN PURGED.

"ALSO I HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD, SAYING, WHOM SHALL I SEND, AND WHO WILL GO FOR US? THEN SAID I, HERE AM I; SEND ME.

"AND HE SAID, GO, AND TELL THIS PEOPLE". . . . .

*Isaiah vi. 5—9.*

THE  
ART OF PREACHING,  
AND THE  
COMPOSITION OF SERMONS,

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY ON THE PRESENT  
POSITION AND INFLUENCE OF THE PULPIT OF  
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

DESIGNED CHIEFLY FOR THE USE OF THEOLOGICAL  
STUDENTS AND THE YOUNGER CLERGY.

BY THE  
REV. HENRY BURGESS, LL.D.,

VICAR OF ST. ANDREW'S, WHITLESBY,  
TRANSLATOR FROM THE SYRIAC OF METRICAL HYMNS AND HOMILIES OF S. EPHRAEM SYRUS,  
AND OF THE FESTAL LETTERS OF ST. ATHANASIUS; EDITOR FOR FOURTEEN YEARS OF THE  
"CLERICAL JOURNAL;" AND OF THE "JOURNAL OF SACRED LITERATURE," ETC., ETC.



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1881.

141. i. 476.

THE PREACHER SOUGHT TO FIND OUT ACCEPTABLE WORDS."

*Ecclesiastes* xii. 10.

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LONDON:  
MITCHELL AND HUGHES, PRINTERS, WARDOUR STREET W.

## PREFATORY DEDICATION.

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TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE AND MOST REVEREND  
ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL TAIT, D.D., D.C.L.,  
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY  
AND  
PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND.

---

MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,

In addition to my respect for your Grace's position as Primate, and my gratitude for many acts of kindness received through a long series of years, I am led to dedicate this Work to you for a special reason in harmony with the main purpose for which it is undertaken, which is the assisting to make as efficient as possible the pulpit labours of Ministers of the Church of England. While conceiving the plan which I have endeavoured to execute in the following pages, my mind was led to dwell on a scene in which I took a small part in the year 1861, when I enjoyed the privilege of forming one of the distinguished company which then gathered together at Cuddesdon, in the church of that parish, and afterwards

in the gardens of the illustrious and lamented Bishop WILBERFORCE, with a measure of whose friendship, and also of your own, I was then honoured. I then heard your Grace preach a sermon to those who were there preparing for the Holy Ministry, and as the pulpit eloquence of Dr. WILBERFORCE was familiar to me as a Clergyman of his diocese, my mind naturally dwelt on the great subject of clerical education, and the important part which the work of the pulpit must ever hold in the training of the candidates for Holy Orders in our Community.

I then laid out the plan of a series of lectures or essays on the Art of Preaching, which from time to time I have reviewed and enlarged, and which form the substance of the present Volume; some of them having already been published. As I believe that I then caught the spirit of your Grace, as I had previously that of your illustrious friend, so I entertain a competent hope that your combined example has exerted a salutary influence on what I have now undertaken. From that time to this, Pulpit duties have devolved upon me without intermission, and my experience in the preparation for them and their weekly performance I hope justifies me in thinking, without presumption, that I may be able to assist and instruct those who are called to discharge the same important and interesting office.

Apart from the necessity of moral and intellectual preparation for the Homiletical portion of the sacred

office of the Ministry, which has been the same in all ages of the Church, there are special circumstances in the present age which make the possession of fitness for it of still higher importance. Your Grace is aware that of late years—as the result of our age becoming increasingly intellectual—a minute criticism has exercised itself on the sermons of the Clergy in the metropolis and elsewhere, and while a great deal of this is unworthy of serious notice, some of it is well grounded, and suggestive of much improvement in the matter and style of our public addresses. This circumstance alone would, I think, justify an experienced preacher in lending a helping hand to his younger brethren, and in endeavouring to lay down some principles and rules of action in composing and delivering a sermon.

Since I have been engaged in determining the way in which I should present my design to your Grace, this disposition to criticize the Pulpit work of the Clergy has been exhibited in a judicious and friendly way by two of our public men whose opinions on any subject are worthy of respect—the Earl of Carnarvon and John Walter, Esq., M.P.,—both of whom have published some useful hints on reading and speaking as generally practised in the Church. These are only specimens of other criticisms and suggestions of a more or less extended range which, taken together, appear to me to constitute sufficient justification for my executing at the present time the Work I have so long conceived.



In the present Volume two things are presented to the Clergy as the chief objects of their ambition in relation to preaching: first, the ability to compose their own sermons, and then to deliver them extemporaneously. The latter topic is largely treated of, but I confess I am not very sanguine of making many extempore preachers, the qualities for excelling in the art being to a great extent more imparted by Nature than capable of being acquired by practice. Yet, when the example of Demosthenes is remembered, no man of moderate energy will be deterred from striving to secure what must on the whole be regarded as a high acquisition by a Christian preacher.

Perhaps I have given more attention to this topic than I might have done but for my personal interest in it, at which I may be permitted to glance. The infirmity of being very short-sighted from my birth made it necessary that even in my first attempt to preach, at the age of twenty, I should dispense altogether with notes, and now to old age the practice has been continued. Having thus been trained in early life to "preach without notes," I cannot contemplate the vast amount of pleasure the practice has given me, and the immense leisure which has accrued from it for other unremitting literary pursuits, without making some attempt to initiate candidates for Holy Orders and the younger Clergy into the happy freedom which it has been my privilege to enjoy.

PREFATORY DEDICATION.

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Whatever the result of my labours may prove to be, I respectfully dedicate them, by your permission, to your Grace, while subscribing myself

Your grateful, humble servant,

HENRY BURGESS.

ST. ANDREW'S VICARAGE,  
*Feast of the Epiphany, 1881.*

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TO THE READER.

As the following Work has been prepared by me for publication while permanently blind, I must beg the reader to remember this fact in courteous consideration of any errors which may have crept into it. These will be found to be, I think, in nearly all cases, merely literal and verbal errors which the reader can at once correct for himself. If a few should be found of a more serious character, I trust they will be forgiven when the circumstances are remembered.

Perhaps I ought to apologize for the fact that the contents of the Volume are, to so great an extent, literary and ethical, and not exclusively technical and professional, but I trust the interest of the book has been rather increased than diminished by this characteristic.

H. B.

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"I CHARGE THEE THEREFORE BEFORE GOD, AND THE LORD  
JESUS CHRIST, WHO SHALL JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD  
AT HIS APPEARING AND HIS KINGDOM ;

• "PREACH THE WORD ; BE INSTANT IN SEASON, OUT OF  
SEASON ; REPROVE, REBUKE, EXHORT, WITH ALL LONGSUFFERING  
AND DOCTRINE."

*2 Timothy iv. 1, 2.*

## Prayer for the Ember Weeks.

---

ALMIGHTY GOD, OUR HEAVENLY FATHER,  
WHO HAST PURCHASED TO THYSELF AN UNIVERSAL CHURCH  
BY THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF THY DEAR SON ;  
MERCIFULLY LOOK UPON THE SAME,  
AND AT THIS TIME SO GUIDE AND GOVERN THE MINDS  
OF THY SERVANTS THE BISHOPS AND PASTORS OF THY FLOCK,  
THAT THEY MAY LAY HANDS SUDDENLY ON NO MAN,  
BUT FAITHFULLY AND WISELY MAKE CHOICE OF FIT PERSONS  
TO SERVE IN THE SACRED MINISTRY OF THY CHURCH.  
AND TO THOSE WHICH SHALL BE ORDAINED TO ANY HOLY  
FUNCTION  
GIVE THY GRACE AND HEAVENLY BENEDICTION ;  
THAT BOTH BY THEIR LIFE AND DOCTRINE  
THEY MAY SET FORTH THY GLORY, AND SET FORWARD  
THE SALVATION OF ALL MEN ;  
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

**Amen.**

**Collect for the Third Sunday in Advent.**

---

O LORD JESU CHRIST,  
WHO AT THY FIRST COMING DIDST SEND THY MESSENGER  
TO PREPARE THY WAY BEFORE THEE;  
GRANT THAT THE MINISTERS AND STEWARDS OF THY MYSTERIES  
MAY LIKEWISE SO PREPARE AND MAKE READY THY WAY,  
BY TURNING THE HEARTS OF THE DISOBEDIENT  
TO THE WISDOM OF THE JUST,  
THAT AT THY SECOND COMING TO JUDGE THE WORLD  
WE MAY BE FOUND AN ACCEPTABLE PEOPLE IN THY SIGHT,  
WHO LIVEST AND REIGNEST  
WITH THE FATHER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, EVER ONE GOD,  
WORLD WITHOUT END.

**Amen.**

THE  
ART OF PREACHING,  
AND THE  
COMPOSITION OF SERMONS.

---

THE PRESENT POSITION AND INFLUENCE OF THE  
PULPIT OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

PREACHING the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is an institution which synchronizes with His history. He defined its nature and conditions to His Disciples and Apostles during His life, and after His resurrection, sanctioned it by the express command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." In its first establishment, preaching, indeed, presented the form of the proclamation by an ambassador or herald, which the Greek word embodies, and although the other more social institutions of the Christian Church somewhat modified and lowered this normal ordinance of proclaiming the Gospel, it has ever since retained its prominence, so that the Christian Church is necessarily a community where the Word of God is proclaimed, and the minister of that Church is an ambassador, so

much so, that the words of the ancient Prophet, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings and publisheth peace," are everywhere felt to be applicable to Christ's ministers. Thus the bright succession of the office inaugurated in a special manner on the day of Pentecost, has run on to the present day, and in all parts of the world where the name of Christ is known, the preaching of the cross is regarded as one of its inseparable elements.

The theological student who is anxious to excel in the duties of a preacher will profitably make himself acquainted with the history of preaching and the pulpit in all ages of the Christian era, but the point of time at which he will stop, and from which he will regard with more interest the nature of the work of an Evangelist, will be the Reformation in our own country, and that platform of religious dogmatics, and rights and ceremonies enshrined and enclosed in the pale of the Church of England. But while this may be regarded as a centre of the area in which the English churchman will study and labour, it will be important for him to give his sympathies to all religious communities which in the Reformation period were agitated by the great wave of thought and feeling which passed over the whole of Christendom, for it is only by viewing resemblances, and the points of difference in the various churches of that deeply interesting period, that the student can ascertain the exact meaning and value of the constitution of the Church of England, and be able more fully to catch the spirit of our Ordinal, and to furnish

himself for the preacher's office; or in the words of St. Paul, "to shew himself approved of God:" "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly divining the word of truth." To the services in our Book of Common Prayer, for the Ordination of Deacons and Priests, and for the Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, we shall now refer as the sources from which we ought to gather the right conception and ideal of what our deacons and priests should aim at being and becoming when they present themselves to the bishop as candidates for the sacred office.

The first thing which must strike even a casual reader of these services is the fact that it is not only presumed, but clearly stated, that every minister of the Church of England, from the lowest order of deacon to the highest, that of Archbishop, is especially called by the Holy Ghost to take such office upon him, and there can scarcely remain a doubt on the mind of unprejudiced persons that our Church demands of every candidate for Holy Orders that he should believe himself to be "inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him such office and ministration." And this is not a solitary statement of the great fact, but it is varied and reiterated in so many ways as to impress upon the mind of the reader that the Church of England, like the Universal Church in all ages, believes that her ministers should be inclined both in heart and intellect to become preachers of the Holy Gospel. We are aware that by a sad subterfuge, which cannot well be reconciled to common sense or honesty, it has been said that

as every gift and grace which man has comes from God, all that is intended in these explicit statements is only what every man must have before he can enter into any office or calling in life, so that whether a young man is destined to be a lawyer, a physician, or a clergyman, he is in either case equally called to the work by the Holy Ghost. We fear we are not alone in the experience we once had of an Oxford graduate, during the intervals in the Ordination exercises in a large diocese, jocularly stating and vindicating his belief that the solemn promises and vows he was about to make before the laying on of the hands of the bishop, really meant nothing more than the recognition of the qualities which ought to be possessed before undertaking any secular office. This ground is, we fear, not unfrequently taken up in order to quiet the conscience under such soul-stirring questions as are asked by the bishop, and we feel it our duty, before proceeding further, to enter our protest against any such misuse and abuse of the plain words of the Ordinal. It will only be sufficient to refer to the concurrent testimony of all Christendom that those who enter into the sacred ministry have always been expected to have been moved and called to it by the special influence of the Holy Spirit.

At this point we are brought face to face with the anxious question—How many of the thousands of English clergymen now performing their sacred functions all over the land were moved to seek Ordination by these exalted motives? or, to vary the question and its intent—How many of them,

at any period of time during their holding the office, are conscious of their need of Divine help? and compose their sermons and preach them in humble dependence on the Spirit of Grace? Any treatise on the Art of Preaching would grievously mistake its end which would allow a student, or young preacher, to imagine that he would discharge his duty if he sat down to copy the sermon of another man, without a deep consideration of his own responsibility, or if he entered upon his preparation of his pulpit duties without earnest prayer for guidance, or without making use of all aids and appliances for the production of an effective discourse; but by the utmost stretch of charity we cannot suppose that this true theological and pious spirit pervades the minds of the clergy at large, and prepares them for their solemn work.

In the present age the idea of the necessity of conversion, as that word is understood by all evangelical churches, retires in our Church into the background, and what was understood by it by Saint Augustine and other great Fathers of the primitive and mediæval ages, and by such men as Bishop Hall and Jeremy Taylor in our own, is displaced from its high position by the mere conventional use of the term regeneration as too often employed without a sufficient exegesis in the offices of Baptism and Confirmation. If young men, from the age of fourteen or fifteen until they apply for Holy Orders, have no careful and pious instruction to make them seek a new birth, no more definite and real than that which is conveyed by this very common abuse of the idea of regeneration, it must



inevitably follow that very many candidates for Holy Orders must be very ignorant of what being called to the work by the Holy Ghost actually means. And the subject becomes more difficult when we remember that, in Christian society at large, there is reason to fear that young men will not often have their minds stirred up as to the meaning and force of the Confirmation Service, which is really so closely connected with the statements and requirements of the Ordinal. If Christian education were conducted in the true spirit of the Church and its formularies, the gradation would be easy and continuous from Confirmation to Ordination, whereas in practice and in fact a great gulf is found to exist between them, so that after passing through a college curriculum a candidate for Orders finds himself confronted with his coming responsibilities without any serious grasp of what they will actually lay upon him; it thus too often follows that the Bishop's examination finds the young candidate practically acting under the erroneous and dangerous ethics of the Oxford graduate cited above, though he may be quite innocent of their essentially worldly spirit. While, therefore, there are doubtless many exceptions of a hopeful and pleasing kind, we shall not be thought uncharitable in coming to the conclusion that a sound subjective impression that he is moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon himself the office of a preacher in the Church of Christ, is the exception and not the rule. There may be piety, and a correct observance of all the conventionalities which cluster around the idea of a deacon

and priest, and, at the same time, an entire forgetfulness or abnegation of that devotion of mind and heart which the idea of being moved by the Holy Ghost must be held to imply. As the ancient Prophets always practised a measure of asceticism, and as John the Baptist prepared for his work by solitude and abstemiousness, so the entering upon the deacon's office in the Church of England demands much prayer and meditation, and self-denial, unless the plain statements and solemn acts of our Service Book are to be regarded as a cunningly devised fable. We, therefore, feel that it would be out of place for us to make any apology for taking it for granted, in all we have to advance in this volume, that our clergy, whether in a state of pupilage, or of full official duty, ought to feel themselves in daily dependence on Divine help, whether in preaching or in administering the other offices of the Church. And while we do not feel it incumbent upon us to preach to the clergy, or to candidates for that office, it is quite impossible for us to take a right view of the present position and influence of the Church of England Pulpit without having before us that aspect of the case which we have now indicated, and on which we shall enlarge further on.

But while we dare not ignore existent deficiencies in clerical training and ministerial qualifications, considering the subject in its positive and existing aspect, and not in its highest relations, we may regard with the liveliest satisfaction the actual social, moral, and religious character of the vast number of men constituting the clergy of the

Church of England, of whom it has often been said, without any fear of contradiction, that they are not excelled by any similar body of Christian men in the whole world. As a rule they can be correctly described as Christian gentlemen in the full sense of that expressive designation; as men of refined culture, moral habits, and the nicest honour, who, with all their defects, which they would themselves be the first to acknowledge, take an advanced place in England as office bearers in the Church of God, and as the pillars of Christian morality in the highest sense in the more than ten thousand centres of influence known as English parishes. All this is proved by the very fact that an immoral clergyman is marked out at once for public reprehension in the sense in which no other professional men would become amenable to it, and it would appear, when regarded at the first glance, that such a body must produce the finest possible array of preachers of the "glorious Gospel of the Blessed God, which is committed to their trust."

Unfortunately, however, the forgetfulness of the great fundamental principle that a clergyman should be specially called to his office by the Holy Ghost, sensibly lowers the position of the whole body, and instead of the highest excellence being looked for as a matter of course in our deacons and priests, the minimum of efficiency is acquiesced in, as though it were a matter of necessity. Hence we find instances all over the land of cultivated and amiable men satisfied with being clergymen in the sense of filling an honourable office, of being

high in social rank, and of having an independent provision for life for services which may be arduous, but can be easily made less onerous than those which any other profession demands. And by common consent, the preaching part of their duty is that which is generally thought to be capable of careless performance, although a high estimate of what it may and ought to be is popularly current in every parish.

The normal position, therefore, of the great majority of men ordained to be priests and deacons for the services of our parishes may be generally stated as follows :—A small portion of the whole number may, if they are graduates, have had a special training by private tutors, or at diocesan colleges, but the great majority who pass under the hands of the bishops will have had only the general education of English gentlemen, supplemented by the few months' special studies which the bishops require as forming the basis of the coming examinations. The ordeal being passed through, these novitiates go to their spheres of coming duty, where their immediate experience is not favourable to their taking advantage of the moral and intellectual impetus which their ordination may be presumed to have imparted to them. In the case of deacons, the theory of our Church seems to demand that they should continue their special studies in preparation for the order of the priesthood, and no doubt some are happy in having the paternal oversight of incumbents who recognise their mental necessities, and give them all the opportunities they can of doing so. But need we ask whether this can be re-

garded as being commonly the case. The ordinary state of parishes has been for a long time past that of being scantily provided with official labourers, and incumbents are generally in anxious expectation of the advent of the curates, whether deacons or priests, either that their own work may be lightened or that some extra spheres of duty may be entered upon. Not only has the curate to harness himself for the work of the Pulpit and other Sunday duties, but he will most likely be taken soon after his arrival to see the Day-schools, which he will be expected to superintend, and on the first Sunday morning he will be introduced to the Sunday School, with its bevy of male and female teachers, all anxious to greet him, and to make him a partisan of their various modes of action; he is then closeted with the Incumbent, and in some instances, sad to say, with the Incumbent's wife, and not unfrequently with his daughters, and the rules and proceedings for parochial visiting, and of various clubs for coal, clothing, soup and banking, appear before him in ominous array, causing him seriously to ponder the question now forced upon him, When are my studies to be pursued, and my sermons made? If these were the only rocks ahead, a little skilful steering might enable the clerical voyager to move safely through them; but after he has got clear of all the demands upon his time, which we have now noticed, the whole social position of the parish has to be encountered, and it must be a very small rural one indeed if it does not send many visitors, cards in hand, to the curate's door, and present to him many cordial invitations to dinner, to tea, and to

evening parties. If the new comer is of a serious and studious temperament, with a moderately competent sense of responsibility of his calling, he will escape the meshes of many of these parish nets; but the chances are that, in addition to them, he will encounter some of a still more engrossing and seductive character, to some of which his peculiar tastes may especially incline him. There may be a river and an accessible boat, a croquet and tennis lawn, a cricket club, and a volunteer rifle corps ready to make him its chaplain, a library and book societies, and if the parish is in a sporting country he will be invited to go to the "meets," and in a moderate way to handle a gun, and make his sermon on the bank of a trout stream, to furnish something to make his solitary breakfast table more pleasant to him. These are only some, although certainly the most common, temptations which the newly ordained curate will have to encounter, but in many instances still more engrossing matters will come in to make his study a place to which he can but seldom resort; an amiable and accomplished lady for example, whose ascertained fortune may suggest to her incipient admirer that he will only be discharging an imperative duty by uniting his lot with hers, and as he has no prospects of his own, either of an estate or a good benefice, the paying court to this agreeable churchwoman may soon appear to him to be almost the only way of obeying the Apostolic injunction:—"Provide things honest in the sight of all men." But we must forbear, though not for want of many more illustrations of the way in which young clergymen are led to find it almost

impossible to keep in mind the solemn promise made a few short weeks or months before—Will you be diligent in prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and flesh? Answer—"I will endeavour myself so to do, the Lord being my helper."

But whatever the dangers and impediments in the way of his pulpit efforts, they must be grappled with and entered upon, and, at the end of a week or two, the curate will have marked out some course for himself, and formed or adopted some plans for the parochial commissariat, in order to provide one or two sermons for every Sunday. And the tone and bias of his mind on this vital matter will be taken in some degree from the character of his parishioners, for if it is true that the priest has a great share in forming the habits of the people, the people on the other hand inevitably place their stamp on the pliable receptivity of the priest. It would probably be a great relief to him to find that his new congregation does not include one person of specially good education, one keen intellect, or one severe critic, though we are fully aware, to a superior mind, the absence of these would be regarded as anything but an advantage. Then the mental state of the incumbent under whom he is placed, or of a brother curate, or even of the clergy in the immediate neighbourhood, will have an appreciable influence on the conception of sermon making, which the new comer will form in his own mind. But he should never fail to remember that the way in which the ploughshare first enters the soil will re-

gulate the character of the furrow, and many classical proverbs and aphorisms of admonitory character will occur to the scholar, and we may hope that he will be especially mindful of the fact that in commencing clerical duties, and among them the duties of sermon making, the *Facilis descensus Averni* of the Roman poet is as applicable as it is to all other important lines of action.

If the sphere of the curate's duty is a town parish, his mental position will be somewhat altered according to circumstances, but generally for the better; there will be fewer of the trifling disturbances of studious habits, some of which have been enumerated, and more frequent incentives to mental exertion. The presence of a Nonconformist minister or two in the town or immediate neighbourhood will always have a marked influence on the curate's mind, whether he regards him as an interloper unworthy of his serious thoughts, or admits him to the privilege of a friend. The Nonconformist preacher, as a rule, has had a long experience in preaching, either wholly or partly extemporaneous, and even if the curate has never spoken to him, his methods of performing his ministerial duties cannot fail to come under his notice, and he will feel the influence of a little innocent rivalry in preparing for his pulpit work; but, in our opinion, his wise course would be to cultivate a reasonable acquaintance with his Dissenting neighbour, both for the purpose of soothing his own mind with the conviction that he is not bigoted in regard to seceders, but also, and chiefly, for the benefit he will most likely be able to obtain



from the fraternal intercourse. Nothing can be more unseemly than to see the minister of the parish church, and the pastor of the meeting house, pass each other in the street without recognition, and if, as is unhappily always the case, this Pharisæism is on the part of the Churchman, the effect must be bad, both on his own heart, and on the opinion formed of him by the inhabitants of the town or village. Our own experience and observation on this question of social ethics has been very considerable, and the result of the whole is that Dissenting ministers, as a body, are well worthy the friendly acquaintance of the parochial clergyman, and capable of stimulating his intellect, and in other ways greatly promoting his benefit.\* We have heard it stated that the standard of the Dissenting ministry is much lower than it was; we hope this is not correct, for within our own knowledge, two or three decades ago, we had the friend-

\* For a most pleasing illustration of the kind of intercourse which may be kept up between a clergyman of the Church of England and a Nonconformist minister, we refer our readers to two small volumes of Letters from the Rev. Job Orton and the Rev. Sir James Stonhouse, Bart., to the Rev. Thomas Stedman, curate of the latter, who had the charge of the parishes of Great and Little Cheverell. Many of these letters were written a century and a half ago, and formed very delightful reading; they abound in pastoral exhortation, and touch upon most topics which concern the cure of souls. The Rev. Job Orton, who was pastor of a congregation at Shrewsbury, died 1783. He was a divine of great repute in his day, and many of his works continue to be popular. Sir James Stonhouse was a large contributor to the works in the catalogue of the Christian Knowledge Society; the two small volumes referred to above may often be found in old book shops.

ship of men of whom any Church might be proud for scholastic or theological attainments. Dissent is a great evil, but in proportion as it is felt to be so, we should do all we can to round off its angularities, and prevent its degenerating into personal dislike and social separation.

We should be anticipating the design of this volume if we were in this place to give any special counsel to the young preacher as to his *debüt* in the parish Church and pulpit to whose ministrations he is called ; and having thus glanced at the position he has attained by his ordination and his settlement in a curacy, we will leave him for the present and discuss the wide question—What does Church society in general expect their ordained preachers to be, and what facilities does the Church herself afford for attaining that standard ? As to the first of these questions, the general reply would be something of this kind :—Church society is most moderate of its anticipations of what a new curate or Incumbent may be, and most charitable of its criticisms of what he accomplishes in his first attempts. The tone of mind in regard to all ministerial duties pervading the congregation is highly creditable to itself, and highly favourable to the preacher. The people do not expect to find the young preacher is an orator, nor do they look for an extemporaneous address, or for any startling statements, or sensational descriptions or anecdotes. In one instance out of a hundred they may have heard an eloquent preacher, or on some public occasion they may have been visited by a popular speaker from a distance ; but these are regarded not as normal exhibitions of what the

pulpit of the Church is, but as a kind of *lusus naturæ* only to be seen once a year, or even more seldom. Nor will the audience be pleased if their new friend exhibits marks of conceit, pertness or dandyism; but if he who ascends the pulpit for the first time among them has previously read the prayers in a plain, unaffected tone, evincing reverence and solemnity of feeling, they will be quite satisfied if the sermon partakes of these qualities, and if by their aid it presents and discusses the ordinary themes of Christian life, whether doctrinal, devotional, or more practical. As we shall see further on, there are scarcely any bounds to the discursiveness which preaching admits of, and to it a beautiful passage in which Shakspeare describes the poetic power of assimilating all things, and finding "sermons in stones," may be properly applied. Variety may thus be made to do the duty of originality, and the preacher with a little care may by the use alone of the Bible and his ordinary reading be able to pass through the first month of his probation with credit to himself and satisfaction to his hearers.

But a longer acquaintance with their new minister will make the parishioners more critical and exacting, for the novelty of deportment of the mode of address, and the style of a sermon will wear away, and something more solid will be required. Then will come in the influence of character, or, in other words, the conformity of the preacher to the standard of correct clerical life, both in private and public, such as his habits of study, his devotional state of mind, as far as can be known by outward acts, and his general conduct among the society of

the town or village. If he is known to associate with the gayer portion of the people, to be present at card-parties, to have a name for skill with cards, or the ivory balls, and still more, if he should frequent the theatre, far greater preaching abilities will be necessary to keep up his popularity than was the case before these proclivities became publicly known. A curate described correctly as a "pious and studious young man" will have the plainest of all homilies listened to with attention, an attention which will flag and quickly wear out when he comes to be described as "somewhat gay" and "a lover of pleasure." As the influence of the pulpit is thus intimately dependent upon the ascertained character of the occupant, and as every one is capable of judging of it, while few can gauge his scholastic and Biblical learning, it is evident that the first requisite in those who are to keep up the position and influence of preaching in a parish must conform to the Church's laws and teaching, and go well through the occasional ordeal of being tried by the Ordination Service of Deacons and Priests.

It would, indeed, be a great acquisition to the popularity of our parochial system if all our clergy could successfully pass the curriculum we have briefly sketched, and be spoken of in places of resort on Monday morning as having preached a "good pious sermon," as being a "pious young man" himself, and as being happily free from the frivolities of the former curate or Incumbent. Those of our readers whose lot has been cast in the vicinity of clergy who can be described as "lovers of pleasure

more than lovers of God," will at once recognise the entire truth of the declaration that while consistency of character will make slender abilities go a great way, its absence will not be atoned for by sprightliness, by colloquial powers, or even a moderate gift of oratory. As the mind of an earnest Bishop seriously dwells upon the men upon whose heads he has placed his hands, and follows them to their various destinations, he will not be able even to guess which of them has the chance of rising to be admired and talked about by parochial critics, male and female; but it will not be difficult for him to form a moderately correct opinion of those who will maintain the character of their church and profession by a conscientious conformity to the spirit and law of the Prayer Book, as clearly defined in such a question as this:—"Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion your own lives, and the lives of your families, according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples of the flock of Christ?" It must be confessed that this is but a moderate standard; yet in how many cases does failure in reaching it, or keeping it, cause even the highest attainments of a preacher to be lightly spoken of, while a conformity to it, though very far from perfect, causes the most humble address to be listened to with respect, and forms in the minds of the hearers a disposition to take their pastor's advice. We come, then, to this issue: our Church aims by her services at making her clergy students of Holy Scripture, the humble followers of Christ, and exemplars and teachers of

Christian conduct, and it is very properly presumed that those who profess to be called to the work by the Holy Ghost will not fail in any of those duties identified with Baptism and Confirmation ; but it would be mere affectation to say that this standard is attained in the great majority of cases. Next, to the remembrance of promises and vows, the young clergy would be most effectually preserved from the snares of worldliness and frivolity by what is pointed out as their duty in another Ordination question : " Will you be diligent in prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh ? " We are thus clearly presented with the mental activities and attainments which are to furnish the pulpits of the land with effective preachers, and according as our Church aims at these acquisitions, and assists her candidates for Orders in acquiring them, will a high position and influence be secured for the Church of England Pulpit. Upon our Bishops, therefore, and those whom they employ as examiners, must depend in a high degree the future homiletical status of those who are ordained.

That a clergyman should be a reading man in a moderately enlarged sense of the term is a definition not quite so axiomatic as it ought to be, but its truth will be admitted by all who have made it their anxious study to ascertain the best modes of making the Pulpit of the Church of England adequately efficient. By a reading man we do not understand one versed in the literature of newspapers, magazines, and novels, or even of works of

a higher grade—in philosophy, history, or science ; but a man who has so far profited by a college education as to be able to pursue his studies when he leaves it. Measures are generally taken by the Bishop and his examiners to insure the ground-work of a good classical training, but we think that training ought to be extended so far as to insure the possession of a capacity, not only to read, but also to find pleasure in reading Latin and Greek authors, and especially to read devotionally, as well as critically, the Greek New Testament. As long as this moderate portion of daily learned reading is felt to be an *improbis labor*, there is little chance of its being heartily, and, therefore, successfully pursued, when Episcopal examinations are no longer impending ; and unless a genuine taste for such pursuits has been carried away from the University, the probability is they will soon be laid aside and forgotten. But, on the other hand, if the student has made such attainments in Hellenic Greek that he can read St. Paul as easily as he can Plato, his tastes will go hand in hand with his duty, and while becoming daily more skilled in classical lore, will make advances equally in the literature of the Pulpit. How mighty the contrast between a clergyman spending an hour in trimming up and committing to memory a sermon which he has copied out of a book, or purchased for half-a-crown, and the conscientious student who has first got all that he can by studying the Greek text, which is to be the foundation of his next Sunday's discourse, and supporting and illustrating it by the learned expositors and commentators which may be ready to his hand.

Having thus arrived at the conclusion that a large amount of mental cultivation should be possessed by those who are ordained to the ministry of God's Word, not merely as an end, but as a stepping-stone to higher attainments, necessary to the successful discharge of the preacher's office, let us next inquire what our Church officially demands of those who present themselves to the Bishop. The answer, plain and unquestionable as it is, will doubtless surprise many who consider the subject for the first time. That answer is, that the Bishop is the sole judge of the fitness of those who come before him, and that in a double sense, for he himself appoints the curriculum and tests the manner in which it is passed through. There are many anomalies in our ecclesiastical system, and still more in the manner in which it is worked; but probably this is the greatest of all of them, that while the preacher's office is recognised by the whole body of Churchmen as of the first importance, no thorough system of training is supplied, and the young man who is destined to become a Deacon is left in most instances to the ordinal of our Church, and to a mere traditional theory of what he will be expected to be, either in the parish, the desk, or the pulpit. We by no means ignore the numerous subsidiary helps which an undergraduate or graduate will obtain in the two or three years preceding his Ordination, whether from private tutors, occasional clerical friends, or a short residence at a Theological college; but we maintain that all these helps, even when combined, do not meet the exigencies of the case, but fall far short



of the mental training which is considered indispensable in every other profession. In the term "profession" we will include for the present only the subjects of law, physic, and divinity, though those hackneyed terms are far from including, in the present day, all the learned occupations for which a special training is thought requisite. A man may attain high honours in the various class subjects relating to those professions; but if he is destined for the bar or medical practice, he will hardly be thought to have commenced the studies peculiar to his profession when he leaves the University, but will then, as a matter of course, take his seat at the desk in the attorney's office, or tie on the apron to begin experimenting in the laboratory. Why should a long technical training be expected in law or physic as a *sine quâ non* to an entrance upon public life, while a clergyman is thrust as it were upon a parish, with a high spiritual sanction indeed, but without having been taught anything scientifically on the subjects of reading the Lessons or preaching a sermon? It requires no great discrimination to come to the conclusion that the wonder is, not that we have so few good preachers, but that the parochial ministry is as efficient as it really is.

It is generally admitted as unquestionable that the religious communities comprehended under the term Nonconforming, or Nonconformist, have on an average a greater proportion of effective preachers than we have; and if such is really the case, it is important to try to ascertain the causes of this superiority. In the solemn induction to the office

of a Presbyter nothing can be added, and nothing indeed has ever been added, to the charge given either to Priest or Deacon, to what is found so explicitly stated in the Book of Common Prayer; but we should err greatly, and shew ourselves to be very ignorant of what is passing around us, if we did not concede without hesitation that Presbyterians, Independents, and Methodists, even if they use the same words, give them a more decided tone, and by reiteration and by different phrases, and, to speak plainly, a much fuller ordinal, they impress far more fully on a candidate for a preacher's office the necessity of its being specially moved and called, and endowed by the Holy Ghost. Compared with the formality of the address to the Candidates for Orders generally delivered by the Bishop, there is a greater earnestness and a greater fulness of adaptation in what is delivered to the same class of persons in Nonconformist Orders, which must have a sensible bearing on the first sermon delivered, and a bearing more or less specific and efficacious on all early Pulpit preparations. But in addition to this isolated and distinctive lesson, which is more especially insisted upon by Nonconformists, we believe it is true that in their Seminaries, and in some degree also in Theological colleges, special exercises are required in writing sermons, and more or less in delivering them, sometimes in a college chapel, sometimes before a whole body of students in a college hall or library. The result of this is, to a greater or less degree, that freedom of movement and expression are cultivated, enabling the candidate to ascend the pulpit and begin his work with the

air of business about him, if we may be allowed so plain an expression. We would call this professional training for the preacher's office, and if to freedom in exercising it the Dissenters owe much of their skill in delivering a sermon, to the want of it, it must be said, we owe a good deal of the absence of animation and tact in the Pulpit services of the young clergy of the Church of England.

We will now notice a second requisite without which a young Deacon or Priest should hesitate before he stands up to preach a sermon which can in any sense be called his own, for any remarks made by us will only apply when some earnest independence is exercised by the coming preacher—we mean the literary acquirements of a student of Divinity, comprehending not only the attainments brought away from college, but the general information of all the subjects which can furnish matter for a sermon or adorn it with literary taste and refinement. We occasionally meet with a Theological student who diligently has recourse to every kind of information which can illustrate his profession, and who, like the bee, collects from all quarters whatever might form a *locus communis* to furnish an idea for a Pulpit discourse. A mind of this cumulative character will never want ideas, but the collector must have a special professional eye for that which he gathers up, making that profession, and not merely literary tastes and habits, the object which he specially intends to aim at in the Pulpit. Thus in referring back to what we have just said, it is a great advantage when a preacher is always reminded that his office is a sacred one, and

when he is always ready with stores supplied by good men whether in Theology, Church History, or the great resources of exegetical learning which lie open before him.

In exact harmony with this statement, it so happens that the chief of those literary acquirements to which we now refer are exactly those to which the Ordination Services call the attention of the young minister, and which, indeed, make it imperative upon him to pursue. The Exhortations contained in those Services are indeed very few and brief, but they very properly concern the sacred aspects of the ministerial office, and fix the attention of the novice upon the fact that he is to be a student of Holy Scripture, or, in the language of our Puritan forefathers, he is to be *homo unius libri*, though he is preserved from a sectarian and bigoted aspect of that phrase by the intimation that he is to pursue all those studies which may tend to elucidate that Holy Book. Most fortunate indeed must it be regarded for the interest and happiness and professional success of a candidate for Orders, that his duty is made identical with the only way in which he can become a "scribe well instructed to the Kingdom of God," namely by making himself thoroughly acquainted with the records and documents of his Faith, or, in other words, with the literature which is to form the substance of his private instruction and public teaching. It is here that every candid person must perceive a marked deficiency in our Church's training of our Deacons and Priests, a deficiency which must be deeply considered and resolutely supplied before the Pulpit of the Church of England can be

thought to have attained its proper legitimate position. A thorough acquaintance with the texts of the Old and New Testaments and a general knowledge of what may be called their literature, or, in other words, of what may be said about their critical and exegetical *étourage*, must be regarded as the most moderate attainment which should precede Ordination at all events to the Priest's office; or, if that is not always attainable, it should be aimed at with a most conscientious earnestness by the minister to be pursued by him from the moment he first looks round his location and "habitat" in his new sphere of duty. From that central point of self-reflection and literary departure, his resolutions will be at once formed, and whatever his past deficiencies he will resolve to become an earnest and laborious investigator and student of the whole Word of God.

Our young ministers, therefore, have only to grasp these two ideas—namely, that they are called by God to a special work, and that the instruments and appliances of that work are put into their hands to be diligently used in order to give them the highest advantages in the pursuit of their new calling, to keep them up to its holy *ethos*, and to give them confidence in the desk and the Pulpit; and let it not be imagined that if all this is done anything like pedantry or rigidity of style will be likely to come out of this devotion to the text-books of his profession; for no one with the true spirit of a Biblical scholar will ever garnish his sermons with Hebrew and Greek words, or introduce learning for any other purpose than to explain and enforce a substance of his teaching; nor will the daily pursuit of the recondite litera-

ture of the Sacred Records give a pedantic character to the general style of a preacher, for as a true literary spirit is sure to be the product of a devotion to Biblical learning, he will be most likely to throw over his Pulpit style whatever is excellent, comely, and beautiful in the vast treasures of human thought. A man whose duty calls him for professional purposes to study the hyssop on the wall, and the cedar of Lebanon, will not be likely to pass unnoticed the Rose of Sharon and Lily of the Valley.

Our earnest efforts in this volume to raise the character of the Pulpit exercises of our Church could not be more surely made successful than by their leading to a larger recognition of the necessity of a clergyman being able to read for himself privately, and even devotionally, the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. As this is a subject to which the writer of this volume has devoted the far greater portion of a long life, he may be excused for adopting a somewhat *ex cathedra* mode of expressing his opinions; and as he has frequently done so in a printed form, no end will be gained by putting the same thoughts into different language. He will be therefore excused if in the sequel of this essay he may occasionally make some quotations from what has been before published, although in a somewhat private manner, and for the use of those who are disposed to take his advice, and become expert in the proper studies of their profession, he will give the references where this more expanded dissertation may be found. In the first place, then, he will endeavour to exhibit the reasonableness of the demand which we think should be made of our clergy for a greater com-

pleteness of Biblical learning than their profession officially requires of them. Remembering, then, that the Bible is The Book of the clergyman, and that though a somewhat extensive collection it is but small compared with the written authorities which have to be mastered by a student of the Law, is it unreasonable to expect that he should be thoroughly expert in its languages, its contents and its literature so far at least as to be able himself to criticise and explain it, or to judge of the interpretation of others? Surely as the *professional authority*, so to speak, of a Christian minister, as much as this is demanded by it; and the consideration is made stronger when we remember that the highest possible interests depend upon it, that the clergyman takes it as his own guide and that of his flock to immortal happiness. Further there is claimed for this Book by itself and generally by those who take it as their guide, an inspiration of character which makes it of the utmost importance to know the *ipsissima verba* of the writers. If inspiration only meant, what some contend for, a general truthfulness of the statements of the Bible in regard to the religion it reveals, the value of the precise words of the writers would not be so great as when a verbal inspiration is admitted. But as all clergymen take what may be called the orthodox view of this subject, and are presumed to believe in the full guidance of the Holy Ghost, both of the thoughts and pens of the sacred writers, by the *argumentum ad hominem*, they are compelled to attach importance to the Original documents. We confess that there is an irreconcilable contradiction in our minds between this high and proper

claim, so universally made by the clergy, of a full inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and their very general neglect of the original texts for translations in which no such complete inspiration can reside.

In the last century, when Biblical learning and literature were much less advanced than they are at present, the celebrated scholar, J. D. Michaelis, published his *Introduction to the New Testament*, which has ever since held a high place in the critical apparatus of the student. It has since been translated and published by the late Bishop Marsh, in 4 vols. 8vo. As the present volume is not intended to do more than to glance at the great subject of Biblical criticism, we shall not quote Michaelis's detailed account of the learning he thought necessary for a well-furnished clergyman, for we fear that if we did so we might discourage those whom our object is to stimulate. It will be enough to state that he thinks it necessary for a competent New Testament critic to be skilled, not only in Hellenistic Greek, but also in Hebrew, Syriac, and Rabbinic. He then proceeds to sum up what he has said on the subject in the following way:—

“It may be objected that in delineating the character of a Theologian I have laid down qualifications as necessary which lie beyond the reach of common abilities. Now every artist in forming an image which is to serve as a pattern of beauty endeavours to render it as perfect as possible, although its excellencies were never united in a single object. But the description I have given of a consummate Theologian is by no means ideal; the qualifications



I have enumerated have been attained by many, and ought to be attained by all who undertake to expound the Word of God. If proper alterations were made in the public schools, the students in Divinity might, on leaving the University, be provided with a sufficient fund of Biblical literature. It is true the knowledge acquired in these seats of learning must be considered only as a beginning, which future study must bring to perfection; but when a good foundation has been laid, the scholar will hardly suppose that idleness is to be the reward of former industry. Even the clergy who reside in the country might prosecute these studies with advantage, and make great advances in the knowledge of the Bible, if a faulty education threw no obstacles in the way, which they have no inclination to surmount.

“Those who have neither opportunity nor abilities to acquire sufficient knowledge to investigate for themselves, must at least be in possession of so much as is requisite to enable them to profit by the learned industry of others, and to apply to the New Testament those treasures of Grecian and Oriental literature which their predecessors have presented to their hands. But a man unacquainted with the Septuagint and classic authors can form no judgment of the critical remarks which have been made on the language of the New Testament, nor determine whether the word be literal or figurative, the sense in which it is usually taken, or only such as extensive reading can ratify by the authority of but two or three examples. He can have no idea of interpretative probability, and is unavoidably

exposed to the danger of giving the same credit to a false interpretation as to the true one. In short, he can see only with foreign eyes, and believe only on the authority of others, but can have no conviction himself; a conviction without which no man should presume to preach the Gospel even to a country congregation."

There is a fine spirit in this passage, although we may be disposed to make some deductions from its generalizations. Some persons will at once exclaim against the whole tendency of it, and try to prove it erroneous by talking large on the trite topics of the sufficiency of Scripture in the hands of the most illiterate, and the non-necessity of what they call human learning for its success in the great objects it contemplates. But the fact is, all men are not called upon to understand the Bible in the sense we are now treating of, and to them it will be sufficient, doubtless, if they use it according to the measure of their ability. The mistakes committed by ordinary readers of the Holy Scriptures are innumerable and constant on all matters which demand education and knowledge for their solution, and yet, by a faithful use of what they can understand (which, by an admirable arrangement of Divine benevolence, is the saving and essential part of them), they become "wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus." But one who is called, or who stands in the place and office of one called, to be a teacher of others, and an interpreter of the Bible, is in a widely different position. He has not only to save his own soul, but the souls of his hearers. He is to defend the outworks of God's

temple, as well as to officiate in its secret recesses ; and to him is entrusted the honourable task, as a scribe well instructed in the Kingdom of God, of bringing out of His treasury things new and old. He is to be the solver of doubts, the remover of stumbling-blocks, the builder-up of the people of God on their holy faith. There are treasures in the Bible which no vulgar eye can discover and no ordinary labourer can bring to the light of day. The minister of the sanctuary is to detect the golden vein, to bring it to the surface, and to use it to enrich men's minds, and make the holy place more splendid and illustrious. The sufficiency of Scripture for a man whom his position in life makes ignorant, is a tender provision of his heavenly Father for his unavoidable deficiencies, but is far from being an excuse for the idleness and apathy of those whom circumstances oblige to be wiser and better than their poorer neighbours. It is high time that our Lord's own maxim should be understood and applied by those who take upon themselves to instruct others, and are enriched by Providence with golden opportunities of intellectual advancement : " Unto whom much is given, of him shall be much required."

" Such a measure of knowledge as enables a man to escape the humiliation of taking everything Biblical at second-hand, and on the faith of others, *has* been acquired by clergymen of moderate intellectual capacities, and what has been often done may now be done again. It is excessively mortifying to think how small a portion of mental treasure may be possessed by a man who shall yet, through the

reflected light of his honourable calling, pass for a decent scholar and a useful minister. This cannot happen in other and kindred professions, which demand, for any measure of success in their disciples, a special and, at this day, a sound and thorough training. The candidates for the professions of Law and Physic must have a *general education* equally good with that demanded for the clerical office. But there is this remarkable difference in the two cases, that when the training of the future physician or advocate is but beginning, that of the clergyman is considered to be ended, or nearly so. The two former pass from the public school, or the university, to the actual labour of the office or the surgery, and, through long years of progressive labour, acquire a fitness for their responsible destinations; but the latter, the aspirant for a profession far higher than either of the other two, goes at once to the desk, the altar, and the pulpit, to acquire in his sacred office, as he best may, or to neglect to acquire altogether, if he chooses, that fitness which we venture to affirm is indispensably necessary.”\*

In connection with what has now been said, we may observe that there will always be a close relation between the general cultus of a clergyman and that of his hearers, or, to speak more explicitly, that a right estimate of what a preacher ought to be, on the part of his hearers, will exercise the strongest

\* For the fuller discussion of this subject, we refer our readers to a paper on Clerical Education, which will be found in a volume by the present writer, entitled “*Essays Biblical and Ecclesiastical, relating chiefly to the Authority and the Interpretation of Holy Scripture.*” 8vo. London: Mitchell and Hughes.

influence upon him. If the English people who constitute the Church of England occupy a low status in reference to religious topics, and do not trouble themselves to know what those studies are which are necessary to make an accomplished clergyman, it follows, as a matter of course, that this deficiency in the public mind of the Church, will tend strongly to lower and keep down the intellectual and learned position of the teachers.

But while a higher grade of Biblical knowledge among laymen will tend to raise the clergy in the same department, the process must necessarily be slow, and we had rather suggest some mode by which the official teachers of others may take the initiative, and exert more fully their legitimate influence. There are two things which might be done, both practicable, and capable of a great amount of efficiency—the establishment of a more complete system of direct training for the clerical office, and the demand of a higher Scriptural scholarship by the Bishops. These two should go together, and mutually strengthen each other, and the happiest results would immediately follow, although time would be necessary to bring their proper fruits to perfection. With regard to the first of these the mind of the Church is often aroused, but never in a sufficient degree to produce a grand effort, such as Convocation and the universities could direct and control, though from time to time a kind of spasmodic effort is put forth in this direction. We have alluded to something of this kind in our prefatory remarks, where the Earl of Carnarvon and Mr. Walter are mentioned by name as having animad-

verted in public on the deficiency in the technical ability of the clergy to read and speak well, quite apart from the substance of their public teaching. Mr. Walter has published the remarks which he made on this point at a public meeting, and they are so appropriate to our present object that we will venture to quote a few of them. In his introductory remarks he observes:—"When we consider how much the comfort of our daily life depends upon the voice and manner of speech of those around us, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the spiritual benefits which we are intended to derive from the ordinances of reading and preaching God's Word may be greatly promoted or impaired by the manner in which those services are performed by the ministers of the Church; the subject, therefore, would seem to be one of considerable interest both to laity and clergy; though, from a layman's point of view, I should say it hardly occupies the place it deserves in a clergyman's education."

This is quite true, and this obvious inference arises from it, the manner in which our services are read can be judged of by every one, while the mental attainments and acquired knowledge of the preacher are matters far more recondite, and can be estimated and criticised by but few; and if inferior matters are thus uncared for, it cannot be surprising that more weighty ones are neglected. But while the intellectual status of the laity, and their ability to criticise, must contribute a great deal to elevate the tone of the pulpit, it is to the Bishops we must mainly look for clerical progress, both in private

study and pulpit success, and, in all humility and a proper deference to our spiritual fathers, we would urge with all the earnestness we can dutifully employ, that a competency in Biblical learning should be demanded by them in those who are to be the Church's ministers.

If the young clergy are made skilful in this department of their office, the greatest possible end will be secured ; for nothing could be more honourable to the profession than for it to be admitted as a matter of general belief that men ordained as Deacons or Priests could read the Holy Scriptures in the original tongues, and were tolerably well furnished in the departments of Biblical literature and criticism. But the great object gained by this measure of clerical learning would be something more deep and intimate than any popular elevation of its standard ; the grand effect would be on the clergy themselves, and would tend, we think, more than anything else, to raise the position of the pulpit, and give it a higher spiritual influence.

If a competent observer were to go through the whole of the parishes of our country for the purpose of registering the standard of pulpit performance, he would, we think, always find it highest where the clergyman possessed the greatest measure of Biblical knowledge, or where he had most conscientiously fulfilled the promises of his Ordination. To speak of an idle clergy would at once provoke an earnest disclaimer, and in the ordinary sense of the term no such class exists ; but a man may be intensely active as a man, so to speak, and yet in-

veterately idle as regards the studies and qualifications of his profession. It is in this point of view that we would lay more stress on the necessity of an episcopal demand for the measure of knowledge we have thought to be necessary ; it will fill up, as nothing else could do, time which is apt to be misspent, and which, indeed, in a clergyman must be misspent, if not employed in the study of the Scriptures. We suspect, indeed we may say we are certain, that the greater number of those who patronise sermon-dealers scarcely know what study is, but consist of those whose time is filled up with engagements most of which are unsuitable, and many of them derogatory, to his calling. Our mind can now take in two epochs of clerical life, separated from each other by a quarter of a century, and widely different in geographical position, but which exactly coincide in the main characteristics of some of the clergy. Not one with the least pretensions to scholarship could be found in ten of them, not one could write a tolerable sermon ; while, in the same proportion, they would be found to be bent on pleasure, descending even so low as the playing of cards, singing profane songs, and frequenting convivial parties. Had these men at their Ordination possessed any taste for Biblical studies, been able easily to read the Greek Testament, or understood the first principles of Biblical criticism, they would have been kept by necessity from the grovelling pursuits we have mentioned, and have found pleasure, in some degree at least, in composing their sermons. Thus the pulpit would be influenced, and the opinion generally be formed that the parson was



a good preacher. If, then, the position of the English pulpit is to become higher than it is, and its legitimate influence increased, "hirelings" and "drones" must be kept out of the Church, and nothing can so effectually do this as the imperative demand that the clergy should be competently learned.

We thus at once see the great wisdom of the demand of our Ordinal, that the persons ordained should diligently study the Scriptures; and the second requirement is equally indispensable and of equal potency, as contained in the following question:—"Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves and your families according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ?" that is to say, the candidate is required to be a good Christian, excelling in piety and in those high qualities which being called by the Holy Ghost must of necessity bring with it. This spiritual character of a clergyman is finely recognised in the address of Mr. Walter, and we quote his remarks in the confident hope that to many of our readers they will prove of great benefit:—"The object of a preacher should be to rivet the attention of his hearers, to prevent them from going to sleep or thinking of other matters, and to impress some moral or doctrinal truth on their minds. To effect this, his manner must be impressive, serious, and earnest; it must carry with it the evidence of his own sincerity, and must proceed out of the fulness of his heart. The secret of good preaching must be learnt, if I am

not mistaken, on the knees ; it is only when a man has probed the wounds of his own moral nature, and found the remedy for them by meditation and prayer, that he will be able to minister to the spiritual diseases of others ; to 'read to them their thoughts,' as has been said by a great master of the art, 'and comfort them by the very reading ; to tell them what they know about themselves, and what they do not know ; and to make them feel that there is a higher life than this daily one, and a brighter world than that they see.'"

It will be seen, from what has now been advanced, that there is no special standard by which the position and influence of the pulpit of our Church can be estimated. Spiritual and moral qualities have more to do with the character of a clergyman as generally measured, than intellectual and learned ones, and a reputation for studiousness and piety will tend to make the humblest discourse acceptable and even popular when a considerable degree of eloquence would fail of that effect if employed by one, between whose profession and conduct there was a visible and marked discrepancy.

But we must endeavour to gather up the threads of these somewhat rambling observations, and come to their main purpose, which is, to estimate with as much correctness as we can the present position and influence of the Church of England pulpit. We have established at least as much as this, that the qualities which all schools of thought would think necessary for a preacher are those which our Church distinctly demands in those about to be ordained, so that a firm basis is laid down on which alone

successful pulpit work can be built up. It is an axiom, as we have seen with English Churchmen exhibited in a documentary form, that a candidate for Holy Orders should believe that he is moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon himself the office of deacon or priest. It is further demanded with equal force that he should be a competent expounder of Holy Scripture, and possess a sufficient acquaintance with Biblical science and literature. And, thirdly, our whole Church in its traditions and teaching demands that her ministers should act up to their profession, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, both in their families and their parishes. Regarding this official position of the clerical order on the surface only, our Church seems to possess a vantage ground, or we may say a fulcrum, by which we may raise her clergy to the elevation necessary for all reasonable purposes; but unfortunately we all know that these presumed axiomatic principles are often diluted or explained away till they become of scarcely any force whatever; the high calling by the Holy Spirit becoming only an ordinary Providential event, Biblical scholarship being reduced to little more than school-boy ability to construe a few verses of the Greek New Testament, and the earnest piety demanded in the Ordinal sinking down to the common level of the religious life of respectable parishioners. Let us now take a somewhat closer survey of our existing clergy and of the relation which they generally hold to the Church's requirements in the estimation of their flocks, and we shall have done all we have attempted to do in

**t**his Essay. Our readers must of course take it for granted that this survey is not an exact one, and can only have to do with general facts and conclusions.

The position of our pulpit will be seen from what we have already advanced to be necessarily a high one, both speculatively, and, in fact, in the opinion of the great mass of Churchmen; it may be said, indeed, that whenever a member of the Church of England tries to formulate in his own mind what the Church is for, or what it is intended to do among the people, he will at once come to the conclusion that it is an institution for preaching, and he will fix his eye upon the parson of the parish as the test or measure of its probable usefulness. We do not say that all the other important purposes of the Church will be ignored; but if the nineteenth article is to be considered of any weight, preaching is to rank before them all, for it teaches us that "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached;" and this idea is so fixed in the minds of Englishmen, that the question, How does he preach? or, What kind of a sermon did he give you? is sure to be the first inquiry made when a fresh minister is placed over a congregation. Before a congregation can be in any degree satisfied with a person placed over them, this primary question must be so answered as to give some measure of relief to the inquirer anxious to know how the Sundays of the future are to be spent. If the answer should indicate only a very ordinary measure of ability in the preacher, the honour of the Church and the com-

forts of her attendants will be so far secured that harmony in the parish may be looked for. But if it should be asserted with justice that the new comer is dull and heavy, that he reads with his face upon his book, that he is heard with difficulty, that what he says is common-place, and that he hurries over his duty as though his chief wish were to be rid of it, then the fate of the parish is sealed for some time to come, and such subjects as Church reform, carelessness of the Bishops, or even Disestablishment, will be hinted in private, and in lively neighbourhoods be even discussed in public. If, on the other hand, the preacher is pronounced to be an improvement on his predecessor, an earnest man, or to quote Scripture effectively, peace and quiet may be expected in that parish for some time to come, and if all rumours and accredited reports shew that the preacher is a pious man, given much to study and attentive to his public duties, and not given to amusements and much company, the position of the pulpit in that parish will be, on the whole, an honourable one. We will not venture to express an opinion as to the ratio which clergymen of this class hold to their brethren at large, but we do not think we shall be thought uncharitable if we say it is an extensive one.

But we rise much higher in the scale when we contemplate that very large class of clergymen who have become matured by experience of their office and by the increasing recognition given by them to their higher avocation, to Bible study, and to the cultivation of personal holiness. Such men are to be found almost everywhere, and they become

burning and shining lights, by the side of which the members of the class we have just mentioned become pale, and increasingly the subjects of adverse criticism. Favoured indeed, and in many respects most happy, is that parish where the Holy Ghost and His offices are not regarded as myths, but as living practical realities, working first of all on the preacher, and moving, and in many instances recreating, the congregation. Those who thus do honour to their high calling by always remembering that it is given by the "Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," are sure to be close students of Holy Scripture, both from a sense of their own spiritual wants and their consciousness of what should be the character of their sermons. The study of a preacher of this class will give proof that the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures are not neglected, and that the Fathers of the Church and exegetical writers of repute are constantly consulted, while only a very meagre share of attention will be given to political journals and the current literature of the day, enough to gratify curiosity and to furnish the mind with valuable topics for the illustration of sermons, and to point the moral and adorn the tale of human errors and sorrows, and of the infallible remedy for all these in the Gospel of Christ.

But whatever excellencies may exist, or be thought to exist, in this very large class of the clergy, it does not at all follow that the art of preaching is cultivated, or even recognised, by more than a small fraction of them. The vast amount of good which is accomplished every week by the sermons preached all over the land is of the most

various and irregular kind, every preacher following his own method, and roaming far and wide into the regions of fancy, caprice, or accident, in order to gain the materials for his Sunday work ; and the piety, or the irreligion, of those who thus provide a weekly supply for the pulpit has little to do with the want of system in this matter which pervades the whole body, though the difference of character must decide in every instance whether the sermons prepared are to benefit the audiences, or to be uttered without leaving any impression. Nor can it be a matter for wonder that good men should win the attention of their hearers by what they put together in the most desultory way, for the range of materials out of which sermons are made embraces the whole of Holy Scripture, the whole routine of religious literature, and all the events public and social, not only of our own country, but of the whole world, as now brought home to us by the universal influence of the press. A man anxious to do good to his flock, and resolute in giving them what he has himself prepared with prayerful attention, can hardly fail to interest, and even please his audience, although he may follow no plan and be altogether ignorant of the art of preaching and the composition of sermons which is presented in the present volume. It is often made a reproach to a clergyman in the pulpit that he can say what he pleases, and this is true of the most conscientious, as well as of the most careless of men ; and this peculiarity of clerical work will always make it difficult to lay down more than general rules for a preacher's guidance, and he may

have a good name, and do much good, though he may on one Sunday observe all the rules of Cicero and Quintillian, and the next take no more order or sequence in his ideas than the layman who may be preaching in the little Methodist chapel at a short distance from him.

We unhesitatingly express our belief that few sermons of the tens of thousands delivered every Sunday are altogether unsuited to convey benefit, provided they are listened to without prejudice and a desire to learn. In the course of a long ministerial life, we have sometimes blushed at the incapacity of men whom we have heard preach; but in every instance where the preacher has appeared to be devout and sincere, we have been compelled to make the confession that what he said would, if attended to and practised, make us better men. This fact must be attributed to the inherent virtues of Divine truth permeating every religious utterance of good men, and every text of Holy Scripture. The adverse criticism now so frequently heard does not arise from the feeling that what is said has no goodness in it, but from adventitious circumstances, such as the mental incapacity of the preacher, his want of culture, and the absence of any logical arrangement of his materials. Even the objection to sermons which are read does not so often arise from the fact that they *are* read, as from the suspicion that they may have been purchased for a trifle, or made necessary by the worldly occupations of the week; and the prejudices created would not exist were it known that the curate had earnestly studied to provide a form of sound words



by the exercise of his own powers, and prayed earnestly for a blessing on his efforts. From all this it will be gathered that the greatest impediment in the way of sermons being acceptable is a moral one, arising from prejudice, from an unreasonable demand for abilities which must be exceptional, or from a comparison of the ordinary structure and substance of sermons with the abounding literature which is now accessible to the least educated of sermon critics.

But out of the large numbers of the clergy there must be men who can take a higher flight, as orators, divines, and scholars, and whose complete general education justifies us in expecting from them something far beyond mediocrity, and such men can be found in abundance at the present moment, numerous in London and large cities, and not unfrequent in smaller towns and country parishes. The annual supply of printed sermons of a high character adapted for the defence of the Faith, the impressive inculcation of Christian ethics, and the pleasurable emotions caused by a persuasive eloquence, are too numerous and too diffused to leave any doubt of the varied talents and accomplishments of a sufficient number of clergymen to stamp a high character upon our clergy as a whole, the excellencies thus developed being sufficient to cause the short comings of great numbers of their less gifted brethren to be ignored or forgiven.

On this point we are happy to quote the following passage from the Address on Preaching recently delivered by Lord Carnarvon at a Winchester Diocesan Conference :—

"It would be unjust to overlook the fact that in London, and in many of our large towns, the public mind of the Church has of late years awakened to the importance of this question, and that vast audiences are now gathered together to hang on the lips of some eloquent preacher, where but a short time since a few sleepy individuals sauntered in and out, in the intervals of a still sleepier service, to criticise the monuments which the good or bad taste of previous generations has bequeathed to us. Under the glorious span of perhaps the finest dome in Christendom may now, Sunday after Sunday, be seen a forest of upturned faces—minds and hearts held prisoners by the eloquence, the reasoning, the fervent faith of the preacher, who justifies the ways of God in the midst of one of the noblest works of man. It is an illustration of the reviving power of the Church in our days, which the philosopher, the politician, and the practical man of the world may do well to consider, and for which all here present may thank God and take courage in the doubts and difficulties of a troubled generation. Yet such a scene as I have described is comparatively rare, and in the majority of our churches where these great gifts do not exist, I own that I wish to see the whole system of preaching brought under the intelligent and temperate consideration of the Church, both clergy and laity."

It would be a pleasing task for us to illustrate what we are now saying by abundant examples, but the task would be invidious and, we decline to undertake it. But we may mention three names whose owners have long since passed away, to con-

firm what we have advanced as to the spontaneous and somewhat irregular character of the training, or want of training by which good preachers are produced. The late Canon Melville could thrill the hearts of a congregation which the largest building in London could scarcely hold, reading every word of his sermon in what might have been thought a slavish manner, had it not been for the sprightliness of his tones and the force and fire of his ideas. The late Dr. Chalmers, who scarcely looked off his manuscript, which he cudgelled, as it were, with one arm, as though hard blows would compel forcible ideas to make their appearance ; and the late James Parsons of York, who when a young man without any extraneous help, would keep listening thousands dwelling upon his earnest words uttered with a rapidity which compelled his hearers to hold their breath until the end of his long and most eloquent sentences was reached. These three names represent, respectively, the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, and the Independent Ecclesiastical platforms, and we think we are correct in saying that no one of these popular preachers received any special pulpit training.

It may be objected to this, that if good preachers are thus produced spontaneously, a treatise on the Art of Preaching must be unnecessary, but instances of this kind are too rare to form more than exceptions to the rule ; and even where natural abilities, and the high intellectual training are possessed, there will always be room for the greater correctness and polish which a special education will confer. We have already stated enough to

prove that the casual and often accidental way in which candidates for the ministry are brought forward renders desirable, and even necessary, such instruction as we hope to convey. Besides, every good Churchman, and indeed every Christian philanthropist, must hope for far better things than any which we have advanced in this essay as the result of the future labours of our Ministers. We have said enough to prove that the present position of the pulpit of the Church of England is on the whole a high one, and that its influence in a greater or less degree ranks far higher than that of any other institution, and there is this important peculiarity in the status of our clergy as preachers, that it is built up on a basis which cannot be essentially injured by the passing varying opinions of the day, or even by what are known as schools of thought in connection with the Church. As long as great principles are maintained among us, although often in a tarnished and weakened form, so long will our pulpit continue to influence for good the vast masses of our population; but we may fervently hope that that influence will increase as time rolls on, and that three requirements of our Ordinal will be more fully recognised and acted upon. A Church must continue to be the salt of the earth, while it is demanded of her Ministers that they should live and work by the aid of the Holy Spirit, be earnest students of God's Word, and examples of holy living both in themselves and their families. These three fundamental principles will, if anything can, not only preserve us from the corrupting errors at work everywhere around us,

but will give a fresh impetus as time rolls on to the pure teaching of the Holy Catholic Church.

In harmony with what we have now written we will venture to lay before our readers reflections made and published by us many years ago, suggested by our attendance on Sunday afternoon's service, when we were delighted by the great taste and efficiency with which the Liturgy was executed, but pained by what we then thought the commonplace and somewhat jejune character of the sermon. If our remarks were now made for the first time, we should probably be disposed to qualify some of them a little.

"Our special object in this paper is to influence those who are now removed from preliminary and external discipline, and who must themselves be the originators of a course of improvement in relation to the great work with which they are entrusted as Christian ministers. Whether their future life shall exert much or little influence on those whose souls are committed to their care, will greatly depend on their own sense of duty; and we hope that if our remarks are read by them they will be received with candour, and be allowed to produce practical results. In our estimation no character is so interesting as a 'Priest in the Temple,' and we would do much to confer on it the greatest possible excellence. If Demosthenes could practise self-denial, and grapple with physical difficulties to qualify himself to be successful as a

political orator, it cannot be too much to expect that some clergyman will be stimulated by a holier ambition to achieve far higher results. Believing as we do that many in Holy Orders are anxious to employ their talents in the most effective manner, we entertain a persuasion that our hints will be suggestive of methods by which their best wishes may be realised. We earnestly wish them God speed in their sublime and holy purpose. 'That will be a happy day for England when its cathedrals and churches shall furnish no occasion for the thoughts which they have suggested to the writer, but when the performance of the pulpit shall fully carry out the spirit and intention of the prayers. With the melancholy reflections we were compelled to indulge, in the scenes depicted in our commencing observations, some hues of hope for the future mingled themselves, and there dawned upon our fancy a brighter series of Sabbath days, each one conveying no doubtful benefits to countless multitudes. Then the sweet voices of the choir, and the pealing notes of the organ, shall be the prelude to the more abiding fascinations of Gospel truth. Every marble column and sculptured capital, reminding one of the zeal of other days, shall become an incentive to present devotedness. Confessions of sin, and thanksgivings for mercies received, shall prepare the hearts of the auditors to 'receive with meekness the ingrafted word which is able to save their souls.' The love of art, the attachment to antiquity, now too often the sole attractions of the Temple, shall only be handmaids of devotion, and conduce to spiritual improvement. Whether in the

crowded city, or the rural parish, there shall be heard the solemn words of holy and faithful admonition, before which vice will quail and trembling hope be encouraged. Divine truth enforced by a fervent eloquence shall win the hearts of 'young men and maidens, old men and children,' and stimulate them to the performance of every arduous duty. The assembly shall disperse, not as it now too often does, listless and unconcerned, or impressed only with the incidentals of Divine service, but affected with a sense of sin, or animated with lofty aspirations after truth and holiness. Intellectual young men will return to their secular occupation, endowed with these principles which are the best guarantee of success; fathers and mothers of families will take with them from the house of God the truths which will make home happy; while the reverend head, leaning over the staff of age, will ponder with humble confidence the rest and peace of 'the inheritance of the Saints in light.' More powerful than any government, however humane and enlightened; than any literary or scientific societies, important as their mission is; the pulpit in its legitimate results will be prevalent to make our country truly great, truly moral, and as far as this mingled state of things will permit, truly happy! A condition of mankind contemplated by that Service from which we have already quoted, will then be realised:—'Wherefore, consider with yourselves the end of your ministry towards the children of God, towards the spouse and body of Christ; and see that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until you

have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, *that there be no place left among you either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life.*"\*

We will now dismiss these preliminary observations with a concluding one, which will be in the spirit with which we commenced them. If to do honour to the Holy Ghost is a primary duty of the clergy in the whole course of their ministry, to honour and magnify the Lord Jesus is equally incumbent upon them, and we may express a hope that no sermon will be taken in hand by any of our readers without a deference to His Divine nature, His public ministry, and the teaching which He has left on earth to guide and stimulate His ambassadors. All we need say on this topic is so well and fully expressed by the venerable prelate to whom this volume is dedicated, in a work published by him when Bishop of London, that we will confine ourselves to his admirable counsels. "The one great requisite must be that we preach Christ, His work, both His outward work, manifested in the records of His past history, and His spiritual work, which goes on still in the immediate presence of the Almighty Father and in the believers' soul. If this kernel and heart of all good preaching be absent, no graces of oratory, no interesting narrative, no discussion,

\* From a paper entitled "The Pulpit of the Church of England," by the present writer, in the volume of *Essays* quoted above.



no learning will avail. Ministers of Christ, ambassadors of Christ, bearing a message from God, respecting Christ, commissioned to win souls to Christ, and build them up after Christ's likeness by the Holy Spirit aiding us, it is thus that our office as preachers of the Gospel is characterised." "The book which we have to expound in preaching, while it sets forth one unchangeable Gospel, is yet as infinite in the variety of its adaptations to all men's changing wants, as is the infinite God whose voice it bears to them. To be mighty in the Scriptures, well acquainted with every part of them in their peculiar history and bearing, accustomed to read and ponder many other books by the light which Scripture throws on them, to know human nature, by having thought much about it, and observed it closely; to be well acquainted with our people by going in and out amongst them, and seeing how they bear the trials of life, its joys, sorrows, and difficulties; and then to know the springs of action, how the conscience is reached and the will influenced; to have the Church's doctrines well fixed and arranged in our minds, in their proof, their relations and their scope—not like some dead catalogue from the schools, but each of them illustrated and understood from its bearing on our own and other people's hearts and lives; to be a man of prayer and holy thoughts, who lives much in that unseen Presence from which he is commissioned to bear messages to his people's souls; no less than all this must enter into our conceptions of a really good preacher, and no wonder if we fall very far short." We may call this the peroration of all we

have been able to say on the position and influence of the pulpit of our Church, while our remarks at the commencement may be regarded as the exordium ; and as long as the doctrine and spirit of our Ordinal remain as there described, and as long as our Bishops maintain the teaching contained in these extracts, the Church of England need not fear that the character of her Ministers will fail to do her honour, however much the amount of that honour may vary in different places and circumstances.

AND JESUS SAID :—

“GO YE AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST: TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.”

*St. Matthew xxviii. 19, 20.*

“AND THEY THAT BE WISE SHALL SHINE AS THE BRIGHT-  
NESS OF THE FIRMAMENT ; AND THEY THAT TURN MANY TO  
RIGHTEOUSNESS AS THE STARS FOR EVER AND EVER.”

*Daniel* xii. 3.

~~For~~ ~~W~~isdom.

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IF THINE, GREAT SPIRIT ! IS THE CAUSE I PLEAD,  
THEN DEIGN MY ERRING MIND AND PEN TO GUIDE ;  
FOR WELL I KNOW THE WISDOM WHICH I NEED  
CAN ONLY BE BY WIT LIKE THINE SUPPLIED ;  
WITHOUT THEE, I AM LOST IN THOUGHT'S WILD TIDE.

OH ! LET NO LOVE OF SELF MY WORK IMPAIR ;  
I WOULD BE WELL CONTENT THY VOICE TO BE ;  
MAKE ME, LIKE PEARLY DEW OR MORNING AIR,  
FROM LOVE OF POWER AND VAIN AMBITION FREE,  
UNSEEN AND LOST, EXCEPT WHEN SERVING THEE.

I SEEK MY HONOUR IF THY WILL I DO,  
MY PEACE, IF WHAT I WRITE MYSELF I FEEL :  
OF THOSE GREAT TRUTHS GIVE ME A CLEARER VIEW,  
ON WHICH DEPEND MY OWN AND OTHERS' WEAL :  
OH ! NOW EXTEND THY HAND, WHICH ALL CAN HEAL.

## **For Action.**

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AND NOW FOR ACTION ! NERVE MY POWERLESS ARM,  
AND SWIFTNESS TO MY LINGERING FEET IMPART.  
OH ! LET NO FAIR EXCUSES LONGER CHARM  
MY LIPS TO SILENCE, NOR ENCHAIN MY HEART.  
GIVE ME THE TEACHER'S SWEET PERSUASIVE ART !

WHEN APT TO TIRE IN SEEKING OTHERS' GOOD,  
ALL-GRACIOUS LORD, INSPIRE ME WITH THY LOVE,  
AND LET ME STAND RESOLVED, AS ONCE HE STOOD,  
MY WORK BELOW, MY HOPED REWARD ABOVE,  
AN EARNEST SOUL, WHOM FROWNS NOR SMILES CAN MOVE.

IF EVER JOY MY SADDENED HEART INSPIRED,  
I FOUND THE TREASURE WHEN I DID THY WILL ;  
OF SORDID AIMS AND WORLDLY PROSPECTS TIRED,  
LET ZEAL AGAIN MY CONTRITE SPIRIT FILL,  
FOR MAN AND THEE A FAITHFUL LABOURER STILL !

# THE ART OF PREACHING.

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## CHAPTER I.

### MORAL PREPARATION FOR SERMON WRITING.

LONG experience induces us to lay much stress on the subject thus indicated, and as it is very likely to be neglected, and to receive less constant attention than its importance deserves, we will make it the foundation of all the instructions we are about to give. The solemn nature of the induction into the office of Deacon and Priest, and its reference to the Holy Spirit as the Guide whose leading the preacher is presumed to follow, must be the keynote of all that has to be advanced, and the student should not commence his preparation for the work of the Pulpit without imploring Divine aid. The end of the week is often chosen by Clergymen as the best time for their sermon work, and by many, Saturday is especially appropriated to that object, and in many families it is understood that there

should be no interruption offered on that day to the seclusion and quiet of him who is to preach on the day following. There may be some advantages belonging to this idea, but it is not exactly the one intended by us in this paper, which is rather that of habitual solemnity when a sermon is contemplated, and as the clergyman should have the subject of Pulpit preparation constantly before him with more or less prominence, the present direction is one which concerns the whole of clerical parochial life. But there is a state of mind appropriate to every undertaking, whether mechanical or intellectual, and in proportion as the department of art is higher, and has more to do with the understanding and the affections, the more of preparation is demanded of the artist. The excitements of passion would disturb the eye of the painter, and whatever agitated the mind would, in that degree, prevent the barrister from calmly considering his brief. But preaching the Word of God is a more serious affair than any other which a man can engage in, and the responsibility of preparation is therefore increased. What we are about to say on the subject is offered with diffidence, and not so much to instruct our readers, as to direct them to some acknowledged truths which yet are apt to be neglected or forgotten. The apostolic counsels given to Timothy comprehend all we mean, and we quote them with an increased sense of the fulness of Holy Scripture and its application to all great moral questions : "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. . . . Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to

all. Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine ; continue in them ; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." While these impressive and faithful words apply to all branches of ministerial duty, they are specially applicable to the composition of sermons—the preparation of the doctrinal and practical instructions which have for their object the salvation of the hearers. We will not presume to touch on the other point, "in so doing thou shalt save thyself," but confine our remarks to the respect we should feel for the truth we handle and for those whom we are to instruct in all our preparations for the pulpit. The old divines dwell much and properly on the connection between success in theological studies and a devout and prayerful spirit ; and much more so between such a spirit and success in preaching. To be instructed in the truths of the Bible ourselves—to read, mark, learn, and inwardly to digest its sacred truths—is the work of a pious mind, and cannot be dispensed with by any one who desires to "do the work of an Evangelist, and to make full proof of his ministry." As St. Augustine says : "A man speaks with greater or less wisdom according to the proficiency he has made in the sacred Scriptures. I do not mean in reading them, and committing them to memory, but in rightly understanding them, and diligently searching into their meaning. There are those who read them, and yet neglect them—who read them to remember the words, but neglect to understand them. To these, doubtless, those persons are to be preferred, who, retaining less the words of the Scriptures, search after their



genuine signification with the inmost feelings of the heart. But better than either is the man who can repeat them when he pleases, and, at the same time, understands them as they ought to be understood." (*De Doctrinâ Christianâ*, lib. iv.) Still more clearly does this great Father urge the cultivation of pious feelings on the preacher, saying, in the same treatise,—“Let him not doubt that he is indebted for his success more to the prayers of good men than to oratorical powers; *that he may learn to pray for himself*, and those whom he is about to address before he begins to speak. On the approach, therefore, of the hour when he is to preach, let him, before moving his tongue, raise his thirsty soul to God; that, having drunk himself, he may have a supply for others, and be able to pour out to them of the fulness which he has himself received. . . . Who but He who sees all hearts is thoroughly acquainted with what it is expedient for us to speak or listen to, at any particular time? And who can enable us to utter what we ought, and say it as we ought, but He in whose Hand are both we and our words?” (Wisdom vii. 16.)

From the teacher of the fourth century let us turn to one of the nineteenth, and the same doctrine is inculcated. Dr. Dana, an American divine, published an essay on “The Importance of Seriousness to the Christian Minister,” in the *American Quarterly Register*, and there we find the following noble sentiments:—“One of the first and most important duties of a Gospel Minister is the investigation of truth. If he fails here, he fails everywhere, and truth, Gospel truth, is of a

very peculiar character. It is not the result of a cold and heartless speculation. It is not discovered by the mere power of intellect, or by mental discipline, or by laborious and learned investigation. It mocks the pride of the philosopher, and often eludes the grasp of the metaphysician. But to the meek, humble, subdued mind of the sincere Christian it spontaneously unveils its charms, and imparts its treasures. In a word, to the discovery of Gospel truth, the chief requisite, the grand desideratum, is seriousness." If, therefore, we are to believe the testimony of antiquity and of modern times, both the truth itself and our hearers must suffer in our hands, unless we approach the composition of a sermon *devoutly*, impressed equally by the solemnity of the message, the value of the souls of our hearers, and our own responsibility.\* "But whether we are about to address the people, or whether we are about to dictate what is either to be delivered to the people, or to be read by those who are able and willing, let us pray God to furnish our mouth with good discourse. If Esther, when about to speak to the King respecting the temporal welfare of her people, prayed God to put suitable words into her mouth, how much more should he pray for such a favour who labours in word and doctrine for the eternal salvation of men." What follows is curious as well as important, as shewing that in St. Augustine's time borrowed sermons were not thought badly of: "And let those who are to deliver what they

\* The following by Augustine, from the same treatise, is equally to the point.

receive from others, first pray for those from whom they thus borrow, that through them they may obtain the desired supply; and then for themselves that they may be able properly to exhibit what they thus receive; and, also for those whom they address, that they may have hearing ears; and having ended this discourse with success, let them return thanks to Him, to whom, beyond all question, they are indebted for success." In short, we should write for the pulpit and preach our sermons in the spirit and temper so beautifully described by Milton:

"And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer  
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,  
Instruct me, for Thou know'st . . . .  
What in me is dark,  
Illumine: what is low, raise and support:  
That to the height of this great argument  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men."

It will prove of great benefit, not only to young preachers but in every stage of clerical life, to accustom ourselves to use those prayers and pious ejaculations which are found so frequently in the Book of Psalms; for example, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law" (Ps. cxix. 18), is a petition most appropriate to one who sits down to compose a sermon; and still more full and suggestive is the following:—"Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness" (Ps. cxliii. 10). And we may be excused if we quote a passage in this con-

nection which must often express the convictions and feelings of a clergyman when about to prepare for the pulpit :—" Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free Spirit; then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee " (Ps. li. 12, 13). There will be many occasions in life when those who are given to self-examination will be startled by a deep impression that their occupations, or their conversation, or their secret thoughts, have not had the character befitting one who is about to write a sermon.

In the *Remains* of the Rev. W. Cecil we find the following observation : "That a minister may learn how to *magnify his office* let him study the character, the spirit, and the history of St. Paul." The special reference is to that Apostle's declaration which we find in Romans xi. 13 : " For I speak to you Gentiles : inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles I magnify mine office ;" and there is an important sense in which the words may be used by every one ordained to an office in the Church of Christ. It is true that the Apostolic office is not held by clergymen in all its dignity ; nor is *preaching* to be looked upon as more than a portion of their duty ; yet, addressing men as Christ's ministers, for the purpose of converting them to the truth and building them up in the Faith, is a most solemn function, and a high conception should be entertained of it by those who hold it. We believe that the *office* of the priesthood is generally revered in this country, although the *persons* to whom it is entrusted may, from

various causes, be less respected than could be desired. But we may remember that this distinction existed in the case of St. Paul himself, whose "bodily presence" was said by the Corinthians to be "weak" and "his speech contemptible" (2 Cor. x. 10). Well would it be if such charges as these were the only ones which could be preferred against the clergy! In that case none need be daunted, or allow the office they hold to be despised, although writers in newspapers may now and then call attention to defects of speech, or of reading, or delivery.

Happy is the preacher who can apply himself to his work, whether in preparing a sermon or delivering it, with a conviction that he is sent of God, and that he labours with God's approbation! But the office he holds may be "magnified" in his estimation, although he has not, at all times, this personal satisfaction as to his own motives and abilities. As our Church provides that the unworthiness of the minister shall not invalidate the Word and Sacraments, so each minister, for himself, should exalt his office, even though he may be deeply conscious of his unworthiness to hold it, or his unfitness for it. By all means let us have that bold front which right motives and devout feelings can confer; but apart from that *the office we hold* should be respected and exalted by us, so as to make us speak "with authority." A consciousness of sin, a doubt as to our own pardon and acceptance with God, and perplexing thoughts about a future state of judgment and retribution, will often mar the preacher's peace,

but they should not stand in the way of his "magnifying his office." *That* remains the same in the midst of all failings and shortcomings, and the preacher should aim at forgetting himself, and concentrating all his energies on the work which is before him. Humility may reign in the heart and yet firmness and confidence mark the pulpit exercises; we may be deeply conscious of our sins in the sight of God, and yet have no hesitation in speaking boldly of divine things to those over whom we are placed.

To have low conceptions of the office itself which is committed to us, must be fatal to usefulness. It is excellently observed by the late Robert Hall,—“The moment we permit ourselves to think lightly of the Christian Ministry our right arm is withered, nothing but imbecility and relaxation remains. For no man ever excelled in a profession to which he did not feel an attachment bordering on enthusiasm—though what is enthusiasm in other professions is in ours the dictate of sobriety and truth.” On this subject we may also quote the remarks of Archdeacon Jones, who, in his *Hints on Preaching*, says,—“The reluctance which some people feel to admit the dignity of the sacred office may have arisen in part from a just indignation at the claims which have been set up by an arrogant priesthood to the almost idolatrous homage of a superstitious and ignorant people. But it should be remembered that the abuse of a doctrine or a truth is no just argument against its legitimate use. What though proud and ambitious men arrogate to themselves that which is due only to their office, do they thereby make void the declarations and ap-

pointments of the unchangeable and faithful God? No: 'let God be true though every man be found a liar;'—let His own divine institution be had in honour, though all who are invested with it be deserving only of His displeasure. There is no necessary connection between the dignity of the office and that of the person who sustains it. The Christian minister who has felt the power of the Gospel in his own heart, instead of priding himself upon his supposed personal dignity, will be filled with self-abasement at the thought of his unworthiness to be entrusted with so weighty a charge. His feelings will be those of the Apostle when he exclaimed, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' Whilst he magnifies his office he will debase himself."

This is a fruitful theme, and hints respecting it might be multiplied indefinitely. We will only now add that as the calling of a clergyman is a religious one, his whole conduct in life should be such as to make any time a suitable one for preparing for the pulpit. But the Sacred office has its secular side and its worldly relations and duties, and these should be so arranged that every week may secure full opportunity for the express object of providing for the special occupations of Sunday. Happy are those young ministers who do not need to be constantly reminded that the season for preaching is drawing near, and are never so occupied with the light amusements of Society as to feel that the contrast is a startling one when they have to betake themselves to the care of immortal souls, and the transacting the duties of an Amba-

sador for Christ in the work of the Sanctuary. Such a temper as we have described is quite in accordance with the instructions conveyed in Holy Writ, and it was as a penitent that David formed the resolution already quoted, "Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee."

We trust we shall not be thought obtrusive if we give a special word of advice on the young preacher's first appearance in the pulpit after the solemn service of Ordination is over. There are many circumstances of that interesting period which may make him feel—quite innocently—a degree of exaltation not likely to occur again, for the laying on of the hand of the Bishop is the central event to which the aspirations and studies of the candidate have graduated for months and even years before; and connected with this will be many friendly congratulations on the success which has crowned an academical career, and many good wishes for a long and prosperous continuance of his ministry. Sober thoughts and solemn resolutions may well be entertained by an ordinary mortal in such a crisis, when we remember that St. Paul needed a special messenger to remind him of his own weakness, "lest he should be exalted above measure by the high privileges which had been conferred upon him." It may therefore give a stability to what ordinary associations might make transient if prayer and devout meditation should especially characterize the first days or weeks of clerical life, and especially the first entrance upon the service of the Church in its pulpit duties.



The grand theophany by which the Prophet Isaiah was inducted into the solemn work of carrying a message of life or death to his people, may without any undue exaggeration be regarded by the young preacher as applicable to himself, and he may also remember that if it is true that there is "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," those exalted minds must regard with deep interest those whose ministrations are intended to produce contrition and amendment in human spirits. Well will it be if these incipient sentiments and emotions continue permanent, so that it can never afterwards be said of them that they passed away like "the morning cloud and the early dew."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE CHOICE OF SUBJECTS AND TEXTS.

THE two things just mentioned are not always the same, for a preacher will often discover that it is difficult to deduce a single compact topic from a text, and equally so to find a text suitable for a subject which the mind has embraced. These difficulties, no doubt, press differently on minds of varied construction and character, and a good deal of the logical faculty is often demanded for their solution. A great mental discrepancy may exist between the use of a text as a motto for a theme or a subject to be treated as a uniform whole, and the same text forming a part of some more prolonged sentiment of Holy Scripture, or as a portion of an exposition. We may have to speak again of the different methods for the treatment of Holy Scripture when a text is wanted or a sermon on a single topic, or when the preacher finds it more convenient to be discursive. Some men find no difficulty at all in fixing during the week on two subjects for Sunday use, their knowledge and grasp of the world around them giving them abundance of materials, and their knowledge of Holy Scripture leaving them seldom in want of a text. We shall at present only refer generally to those topics of pulpit discourse which present themselves almost everywhere, and which may be chosen by all classes of minds.

The services For The Day present a supply of topics for sermons, and when they are judiciously selected so that their connection with the prayers and portions of Scripture can be shewn, an interest is created which ought never to be lightly thought of. An inferior sermon will often be raised to a good one, as to the effect produced, when it harmonises with something prominent in the service of which it is a part, and, therefore, the ecclesiastical bearings of the day, the Collect, the Epistle and Gospel, the Lessons and the Psalms, will supply year after year, abundance of subjects for the preacher. This plan has also the further advantage of making the people better acquainted with the principles of the Church, and the special design and relation of all parts of the Liturgy. Of course, in thus making the Church Service supply topics and texts, none of its special rites and observances should be forgotten. Baptism gives a fine opportunity for impressive sermons on the duties and responsibilities of a Christian profession ; so do the Holy Communion, the Marriage Service, and the Burial of the Dead ; and especially Confirmation. Events of importance, either of a public or national kind, or such as occur in a town or village, should never be lost sight of by the careful and earnest preacher. When anything of an unusual kind strongly impresses an audience, the opportunity should always be embraced to turn the current of feeling to good account. Not only does this attention to passing events please a congregation, but the neglect of it is prejudicial, as indicating a want of feeling or of tact in the clergyman ; or, perhaps,

he will be suspected of not being able to go out of his way to preach a special and appropriate discourse. We heard the observation made of some preachers who took no notice of the death of the Prince Consort, that most likely they *could not*; not having a sermon fit for the solemn occasion and not being able to compose one. Such remarks may be uncharitable, yet they are natural, when such an obvious duty as taking advantage of surrounding events and circumstances is neglected. Sudden or striking deaths, or the deaths of excellent persons who will be much missed, and whose lives were consistent and useful, present fine occasions for special sermons; and without descending to the obvious faults of what are known as funeral sermons, they may be made very useful by their appealing to a tender and impressible state of the public feeling. Though a little foreign to this topic it may be interesting here to observe that we have sometimes in our own practice made a service a little more interesting, by asking the prayers of the congregation, on matters not provided for by an Order of the Queen and Council; such, for instance, as for the restoration of peace in Zululand, and for those suffering the miseries of war in that region, and the invasion of their country, and still more recently, for the bereaved Emperor of Russia, whose position, both social and political, was so well calculated to excite English sympathies.

But however beneficial it may be to take subjects from the Service of the day, the plan must sometimes be departed from, or the preacher may be charged with neglecting some important parts of

Divine Truth. The grand peculiarities of the Gospel need to be often brought before a congregation, however educated and enlightened it may be; and still more, before a rustic and unlearned one. A short course of lectures on the Creeds will afford an opportunity of presenting the great features and the harmony of the Christian system. Sermons on repentance, on the uncertainty of life, and on a future state of happiness and misery, should be often introduced in the course of the year, and intermingled with the stated topics suggested by the Services. Sermons to distinct classes of persons—as the young, young men and women, masters and servants, agricultural labourers, members of clubs, etc., etc., will still further introduce variety, and keep the interest of a parish alive. We might go on much further on this point, but it cannot be necessary, for we have said enough to shew that a preacher cannot be very commonplace who keeps his eyes open to what is passing around him, and makes his teaching bear upon it. Latimer's sermons are good illustrations of the way in which things familiar and important to the hearers may be introduced into the pulpit; and without imitating his homeliness, his method may be sometimes adopted with advantage.

A great deal is frequently said in the public journals on the little sympathy felt by the clergy with political movements and literary tendencies of the age; the Pulpit being compared by them, very unfavourably with what is known by the general designation of the Press. This charge is often counterbalanced by one of an oppo-

site tendency, namely, that the clergy too frequently interfere with political questions and add to the long list of topics open to them, references to public events, and especially to such as excite the country at large, and smaller matters thought of great importance in towns and country parishes. We do not think that either of these imputations can be proved to any extent, though individual instances of neglect and rash zeal may frequently occur. We will however introduce here a few further observations on what is called "Preaching to the times," as it is a subject often discussed, and will frequently come before the clergyman when anxiously considering the subject of his next Sunday's Sermons. Some time ago a Layman is reported to have spoken severely at a Church Congress of the want of a literary spirit in the performances of the pulpit, declaring that many of them are unsuited to this nineteenth century. "Educated Laymen," it was asserted, "take their idea of the standard of modern literature from leading articles in our principal newspapers and magazines, and they become estranged from the clergy when they always use commonplace topics clothed in the old fashioned vernacular and archaic style of their forefathers." And it was added by the speaker that the clergy may find the pulpit an engine of vast power if they will make its teaching in consonance with the wants and spirit of the age. With a small admixture of truth there is a good deal that is specious in this charge, and we fear that if the advice were generally followed the cure would be more injurious than the disease; the charge loses

much of its gravity by its vagueness, and when examined closely, is seen to be without any real foundation. We believe that, speaking generally, the pulpit *is* an engine of vast power; but it becomes so by the superabundance of the commonplace topics which we have enumerated above, and also by the prevalence of the simple words and style which the critic complains of. The *teaching* of the Church cannot, we maintain, be altered to suit any age, but must be the same as time rolls on, so long as the Church enjoys the enlightening aid of the Holy Spirit to keep it from error. But we by no means advocate a neglect of what we may call the literary spirit nor with proper limitations, the use of the expression, "wants of the age."

There can be no doubt that light reading, now so generally diffused, *does* incline the public taste to be dissatisfied with the common run of sermons. How can those who read, and delight in nothing all the week but newspapers, and magazines, and novels, be expected to admire a discourse plainly delivered, which contains no startling statements, no anecdotes, and no spicy, high-flown language? Are the clergy ambitious of emulating the "modern literature of the leading articles in newspapers and magazines," or do they believe that there is a better standard to which they should try to conform? We can have no doubt what the almost universal reply will be. As regards style and the choice of words, we readily allow that some of the best newspaper writers may be imitated with advantage, for they are often clear, idiomatic, and

eminently Saxon, approaching, in fact, to the "archaic language." But it is the matter, more than the style and verbiage of newspaper writers, which makes them popular, their tales, their use of *ad captandum* arguments, their appeals to the passions or prejudices of their readers; and in these respects they are to be guarded against rather than followed. In all seriousness, we cannot admit that the contrast presented by the pulpit and the "press" is all in favour of the latter, but that the contrary is the case. The press aims to excite, to create a partisanship, to amuse and amaze by turns those to whom it appeals; the pulpit can only seek to instruct, to edify, to warn, or to console, by plain Scriptural arguments and statements; by the use of topics, in fact, which are in their nature limited, and which cannot be taken by the preacher from *any* source which may present itself. If we keep in view the rule,

"In every work regard the writer's end,"

we shall at once see that the style and matter of modern literature, as found in newspapers and magazines, cannot without impropriety—we might say, without irreverence—be imported into the composition of sermons for the use of the Church of England. Goldsmith's *Village Preacher* is a beautiful picture, and one of its features must ever remain the characteristic of a clergyman who does his duty, regardless of the way in which the popular gale may blow;

"Uncustomed he to fawn or seek for power  
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour."



So much we have felt it right to say as to one meaning which may be attached to the expression, "The wants and spirit of the age."

There is a sense in which sermons *should* come up to the spirit of the times, and appeal to the diversities of human character as developed in different countries, climates, and stages of civilization. This is to be done by the preacher himself being in advance in that general literature, and the literary tastes and feelings, by which our age is distinguished. For example, if a clergyman should confine himself to mediæval authors, or to the primitive Fathers, his range of ideas would be too limited for our times ; or if his reading and studies should be all classical, or all Biblical, or all theological, a stunted state of mind would be produced which would exhibit itself in his sermons, however excellent they might be in other respects. Let a certain amount of catholic truth be granted to the sermons of all clergymen alike, yet the mode in which it is presented may vary in every one of them. The same water from one spring may be conveyed through various channels, some whose banks are arid and bare, others which have on both sides all that is beautiful in nature. So the preacher may present to his hearers every necessary and important topic in the channels of his own thoughts, which are commonplace and behind the culture of the age ; while another may exhibit the same truths in the beautiful setting of a well-stored mind and a refined taste. The cultivation of the mind, therefore, must tell on the sermon, and a general knowledge of literature and science and

art, and an acquaintance with history, political and religious, will all tend to render a preacher more acceptable. Preachers, then, should be literary men, and if they are so, and in proportion as they are, they will be on a level, at least, with their auditors, and the objections now often made to their sermons as being dry and uninteresting will disappear. While writing on this subject it may be as well to guard the clergy against fostering the religious prejudices of their congregations by the choice they make of their subjects. We sometimes hear the complaint that sermons are political or personal or not sufficiently doctrinal, experimental or practical, and in some parishes these predilections are carried so far that the preacher is made to know that if they are neglected, he will be sharply criticised and his preaching be prejudiced. Any tendency of this kind must of course be met prudently and duly considered, but at the same time it must by no means be indulged so as to create the idea that a congregation or a part of it may dictate to the pastor the topics he should most frequently discuss. It may be safely affirmed, as a rule, that where a congregation favours any particular class of doctrines or precepts, or finds fault with a preacher for preaching or not preaching in a particular way, they really require that the opposite of what they demand should be the oftener insisted on. If a young preacher is deterred from doing the part of a good citizen by always avoiding the political aspect of things around him, or is afraid of speaking boldly against some prevalent sin because he knows it is practised by a squire or a

churchwarden, he may get a few more smiles or other favours as a reward, but he will lose the sense of independence as God's servant, and the approval of a good conscience.

There is reason to fear that the freedom and independence of pulpit teaching in our Church have been often threatened, if not actually impeded, during the recent period of political excitement, when the question of war or peace has been so hotly discussed and has divided the country into two opposite parties. This is not the place to enforce our own earnest opinion that the recent wars have been utterly indefensible, unjust, and inhuman, and therefore contrary to the spirit and teaching of Christianity; but we must emphatically state that the ministers of Christ are bound on all occasions to expose the present, worse than heathen condition of Christendom, when the sword and the sabre are usurping the place of the Cross, and the highest honours and rewards of our own country are bestowed upon those whose profession can only be carried out by the slaughter of their fellow men.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE EXORDIUM OR INTRODUCTION.

HITHERTO, our remarks have been of a miscellaneous kind, and mostly preliminary. We shall now proceed to the structure of the sermon itself, the various parts of which it is composed, and the different methods of distributing them. By common consent, and in the nature of things, the *Introduction* comes first; or, as it is technically called, the *Exordium*. Great importance is attached to this part of a discourse by the ancient writers on oratory, and many are the rules they give for its effective performance. Quintilian tells us that the design of the exordium is solely to propitiate the hearer, to remove any prejudice he may entertain, and to make him well disposed, attentive, and teachable. This general idea is thus expanded by Dr. Porter in his lectures on Homiletics: "The only valuable purpose for which any public speaker can address an assembly is to make them understand, and believe, and feel, the sentiments which he utters. The chief object, then, of an Introduction is to secure that attention which is most favourable to the attainment of this purpose; and the obstacles which prevent this favourable attention are commonly found in the prejudice, the ignorance, or the indifference of the hearers." But this is more applicable to the eloquence of the bar and the senate than of the pulpit, and the

preacher's Introduction is more of the text and subject than of himself. Yet it is well known how smoothly a sermon goes on either in its composition or delivery, when a good beginning is secured. Perhaps this is the most difficult part of the art of writing a sermon, and it will be done with ease in proportion to the general acquirements and inventive powers of the artist. The introduction of the subject to the hearer may be effected with grace, or it may be blunt and disagreeable, and very different effects will be produced on the hearers accordingly. The most common and most obvious form of introduction is to relate the circumstances of the text; the book in which it is found, the chapter, the design of the sacred writer, the historical facts and personal allusions—all these supply simple and natural Introductions. Thus, in a sermon taken from the Psalms, the Exordium may dwell on the probable author and occasion of writing : as, presuming that the title of the ninetieth Psalm is correct, and that it is a "Prayer of Moses the Man of God," the position of the Israelites in the wilderness will supply fine illustrative remarks. Our Lord's discourses very often are full of references to the locality in which they were delivered, and to national customs, and these, briefly related, will make good introductions. But the chief thing should be to point out the relation of the text to its connection in the narrative, or prophecy, or Psalm; for in no sense can a preacher be said "rightly to divide the word of truth," who uses a text as a motto regardless of its relations and harmonies. Yet how often are texts taken because they contain

some striking sententious sentiment, and quite as often they are preached upon as if they were isolated aphorisms, quite divided from the analogy of the faith. The circumstances of the hearers will often suggest good Introductions, and so will the variations of the Services and of the Christian year. All special sermons, such as those on national events, those for charitable objects, benefit societies, and the deaths of parishioners, can be introduced by a recital of the occasions which have led to them. If there has been an alarming death, either sudden or accidental, and all the people are expecting to hear it referred to, a sermon could not have a better Exordium than a short reference to the event. Every mind will be attracted by such a recognition of what has been moving it; while a foreign topic, however important in itself, will be comparatively uninteresting.

Illustrative facts, culled from various reading, should not be neglected as Introductions to sermons. We do not recommend a free use of anecdote, but a striking event may be made to minister in the service of the sanctuary. If the sermon were to be on the value of the soul, and the consequent efforts to be made by us to save it, a better introduction could not be than a reference to some heroic effort put forth for the salvation of the body, as that of Grace Darling for example. The memory of the preacher will easily supply many such cases, and they furnish naturally the inference, that if the life of the body is thought worthy of such perilous and disinterested efforts, much more should the life of the soul. But on the introduction of anecdote as

an Exordium let us hear the opinion of the Rev. Daniel Moore : " Other forms of exordium may be noticed, very effective in skilled hands, but demanding for use a sound and discriminating judgment. Of such is the relation of an anecdote, or allegory, or the startling exclamation, or the introduction of some imaginary objection to the language of the text itself. Of the anecdote it seems only necessary to remark, that it should be apposite, brief, pointed. People will generally follow us through a well-told incident, and even become interested in it ; but the reaction is quick, and the posture of mind towards the rest of our sermon unkindly, if they find it was for its *own* sake that we told the story, and not for its relevancy to the point in hand." But although ancient and modern precedence are in favour of some artificial Exordium or Introduction, it will be a mistake to suppose that it is indispensable to a sermon. We have heard some of them which we thought were an incumbrance rather than a help to the discourse, and an experienced preacher will know how to do without them by entering at once on the main subject. The sermons of the Puritan age, which were more often an hour long than shorter, required some adventitious aids to eke them out, and the preacher had often performed half his task before he really entered upon it. When delivering a message in common life we do not find a prologue necessary, though some garrulous persons will often entertain us with one, nor does it always follow that the external circumstances of a text need be noticed in order to elucidate it. In the example, for instance, given above from Ps. xc.,

the shortness of human life as the result of Divine anger need not be illustrated by any reference to the Israelites; it may be entered upon immediately as a fact with which we are all acquainted. In the same way reverence in God's house can be urged upon the audience from the text, "My house shall be called the house of prayer," without our informing the people that the selling of cattle and birds, and the exchanging of money had to do with the prescribed offerings of the sanctuary. On the other hand, what is sometimes made the Introduction might, by a slight lengthening, become the sermon itself, as in this instance the customs of the Jews at the feast of the Passover might give a suitable occasion for expatiating a little on the tendency to abuse Divine institutions which the whole passage sets before us. At all events, we may advise the preacher not to think a formal Exordium necessary, but purposely to do without it sometimes in order to give greater freedom to his customary method.

From these general observations on the exordium of a sermon, we pass to some practical illustrations. As the connection of a text will more often than anything else furnish an appropriate Introduction, some examples of this may be useful. Take, for instance, Genesis ix. 13: "I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth." An interesting, though perhaps not a profitable, sermon might be made on the history of Noah, and the local and temporary circumstances of the text; but if the subject is to be made to bear upon our hearers, as



Christian men, then what is personal to Noah and his sons may be confined to the Introduction. There can be little doubt that the Patriarch and his family, when they came out of the ark and saw the desolation around them, the result of God's anger, felt dismayed, and required to have some confidence instilled into them as to the stability of that new world on which they entered. The reference to the rainbow had, therefore, a kind and special application to this natural anxiety on the part of Noah, and this fact will form a suitable Introduction to a sermon on the "bow in the cloud," in its bearing on God's providential and gracious dispensations.

An interesting sermon may be made on Jonah ii. 4, "Then I said, I am cast out of Thy sight, yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple." This might afford profitable meditations if we knew nothing of Jonah or his mental associations but what the book bearing his name affords us; but there is a plain reference in the text to his knowledge of the past history of his country, and of its religious literature. A pertinent introduction may be thus secured by a reference to 1 Kings viii., where Solomon prays at the dedication of the Temple. The burden of that prayer is, that his people, in their after history, in all their wanderings and calamities, might turn to that sacred place, and be remembered and pardoned. Thus, in verse 44, we read, "If Thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever Thou shalt send them, and shalt pray unto the Lord toward the city which Thou hast chosen, and *toward the house* that I have built for Thy name." By a reference to this, a

beautiful light is thrown upon the subject, and the way is opened for its general application. As Jonah was encouraged to look to God's holy Temple, so Christians may confidently turn to Him who was greater than the Temple, etc.

The reflections of Psalm viii. are obvious ones to a pious and thoughtful mind. The starry heavens are calculated to fill an observer with humble feelings, and to make him exclaim, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him !" But while a discourse could easily be produced from this general idea, its exordium would have great force if taken from the circumstances in which, most probably, the psalm was composed. David was a shepherd, and while keeping his flock by night, he meditated on the moon and the stars, and drew the inference as to man's littleness. And the same fact supplied him with his reflection on the bountiful manner in which God endowed man with worldly possessions. Had he lived in a crowded city, he might have mentioned the dominion given to man over material wealth of a different kind ; but his position led him to speak of "all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field."

The parable of the good Samaritan conveys abundant instruction with regard to kindness to strangers who may be in need of our aid. But its beauty and force will be lost if the connection of it with Jewish opinions and prejudices is forgotten. It is a *Samaritan*, as contrasted with the priest and Levite, on which stress is to be laid. The Jews hated the Samaritans, and would acknowledge no good in them ; while they had an extravagant idea

of the superiority of their own priests and Levites. Apart, then, from the general doctrine taught by the parable, these facts may be noticed as the Introduction; first, that Jews might be hard-hearted; secondly, that a Samaritan might be kind and benevolent.

A preacher in the pulpit of the Church of England should be able to derive any light which may be afforded by the original Scriptures, and a modest allusion to the Hebrew or Greek text will often make a good Exordium. Thus, in 1 Cor. ix. 20-22, St. Paul speaks of his compliance with certain prejudices which he found among Jews and Gentiles, which stood in the way of his success. To the Jew he became as a Jew; to them who were without (the law) he appeared as without the law, *i.e.*, he did not press Jewish arguments. From these special cases he *seems* to proceed to a general statement, which creates a difficulty. He says, "I am made *all things to all men.*" But this apparent licence of expediency disappears when we read the Greek—*τοῖς πᾶσι γέγονα τὰ πάντα*, "I became all these to all these"—*i.e.*, to the Jew, I became a Jew, etc. He made all the compliances mentioned to the persons also mentioned, and there is thus no foundation in the text for the doctrine of general expediency as sometimes understood and taught.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DIVISIONS OF SERMONS—NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL.

AFTER a suitable Introduction has been secured, the question arises, How is the subject of the text about to be discussed to be laid before the hearers? A text is a proposition, and must have a logical dependence of its parts—such as premises and inference, a beginning, a middle, and an end. As a sermon aims at *convincing* in order to induce to some action or line of conduct, various reasons or proofs must be brought forward to that end; and hence arises the common practice of dividing a pulpit address into heads. As a rule, divisions exist naturally, and the only thing to be decided is, how far they are to be formally expressed; or to what extent the matter of sermons should be divided into the *first, second, third*, etc., as is most commonly done. It is conceded on all hands that there must be divisions and subdivisions as there are propositions. They remind us of a tree, the trunk being the subject, and the main branches and the smaller ones ramifying from it; corresponding with the innumerable *heads*, large and small, under which the instruction is doled out to the hearers. Contrasted with this is the opposite plan of having no technical divisions at all, but proceeding from the beginning to the end of a sermon in a continuous discussion.

As a rule, we think that the great divisions of a sermon should be stated in the form of a proposition. The hearer is more easily led on from one step of the subject to another by this plan; the attention is kept up; and if any steps of the process are lost, the connection and series of the thoughts may be recovered. It is evident that a higher degree of the intellect is demanded in the hearer to accompany a preacher without these formal pauses than with them; and as our congregations ordinarily demand all our aid in comprehending our meaning, this ought to settle the question. But there is another view of the matter, and that is whether the divisions should be announced beforehand. Nothing can be more formal than the method of some preachers in relation to their divisions. For instance, in preaching from Genesis i. 1, 2: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth; and the earth was without form and void," they would say something of this kind, after the Introduction. "I shall divide my subject into three parts or heads." *First*, I shall consider the time mentioned—*In the beginning*: *Secondly*, the work then performed—*God created, etc.*: and *Thirdly*, the condition of the earth spoken of in the text—it was *without form and void*. Some time is taken up by this plan, and it may help a barren preacher a little; but the question is, is it profitable for the hearers? Fénelon argues strongly against these announced divisions. They cramp the discourse. They break the continuity of the subject. They present us with three or four little sermons. They suspend the free march of the subject, and, at every

moment, command unseasonable halts. "A sermon hampered by these restrictions," he says, "is not a beautiful well-veined marble, but a stiffly formed mosaic." Professor Blunt, also, might be quoted on the same side, though his objection rests on a very different ground. "Allowing the use of heads," he says, "it may be sometimes questionable whether it is expedient to announce in full your plan at the outset, as it may occasionally have on the hearer the effect which the prospect of a long road has on the traveller." On the other hand, Bishops Wilkins and Tillotson, and most of the modern continental writers on preaching, argue strongly for a clear and distinct announcement. "The practice is eligible," says Bishop Wilkins, "for the benefit of the hearers, who may understand and retain a sermon with greater ease and profit when they are beforehand acquainted with the general heads of discourse." Of continental authorities one writes: "Divisions are important, because they determine the point of view from which the orator proposes to consider the proposition; whilst the hearer being in possession of a view of the whole subject, more easily follows the development of the ideas, and more easily finds again the thread of the discourse when a moment of distraction has made him lose it." It is shewn that Fénelon is wrong when he says that the practice of announced divisions is discountenanced by the orators of antiquity; and Cicero is adduced, who in his oration, *pro lege Maniliâ*, announces three heads with the words, *primum, deinde, tum*. But the instances are numerous.

It will probably be felt by all our readers that,

with regard to divisions, a mixed method will be better than any uniform plan ; sometimes to divide a subject technically, sometimes not ; now to announce the heads of discourse beforehand, and then to let them appear as they arise one after the other. In some preachers the general laying out of a sermon is so uniform that the hearers can tell what is coming without any great sagacity. So much time is always spent in the Introduction ; then follow three or four divisions, each ramifying with various degrees of luxuriance ; and, lastly, an *improvement* drags its lingering length behind. Hundreds of volumes of sermons could be referred to, following this humdrum course with few variations ; but it is not generally the fault of the clergy of the present day. Many are apt to fall into the contrary extreme, and to treat the hearers to a short continuous essay on some Scriptural topic. We would advise to vary the plan as much as possible, according to the demands of the subject. Some texts will admit of a more formal expository treatment than others ; while a different class will be better treated in one head of discussion or application.

The grand principle, however, which should pervade all divisions, whether announced and stated or not, is that they should all tend to unity in the discourse. It may often be observed in printed sermons, that each division would well make a complete discourse ; the heads are not *necessarily* connected, although they may legitimately be deduced from a text ; and no connection of the parts tends to one general impression at the

close. Let us take an example. In the parable of the sower, several different effects of the Word are mentioned, and a sermon *might* make a division of each of them. But this would weaken the whole subject. The proper way would be to notice the whole parable in the Introduction and then to single out one of its parts for special consideration, and to make all the sermon bear on that. The hearer should always have a distinct impression left on his mind, which cannot be the case when a number of principal topics are brought forward, essentially distinct and only linked together by their accidental position in a scriptural parable or discourse. An exception must be made for expository preaching, of which we shall speak on a future occasion. On this unity of topic many excellent hints are found in writers on public speaking. The following is from Bautain on *Extempore Speaking* (Bosworth and Harrison, 1858): "Above all you must decide with the utmost clearness what it is you are going to speak upon. Many orators are too vague in this, and it is an original vice which makes itself felt in their whole labours; and later on in their audience. Nothing is worse than vagueness in a discourse. It produces obscurity, diffuseness, rigmarole, and wearisomeness. The hearer does not cling to a speaker who talks without knowing what he would say, and who, undertaking to guide him, seems to be ignorant whither he is going. The topic once well settled, the point to be treated once well defined, you know where to go for help. You ask for the most approved writers on that point," etc., etc.

Still more explicit are the remarks on this



subject by the Rev. Daniel Moore : "Foremost among the structural qualities of a good sermon we should put a careful regard to unity of subject. The injunction *sit simplex duntaxat et unum* is a good rule, not for one art only but for all. An epic without its hero, a piece of music without its key, a picture made up entirely of chief figures, would, in spite of any excellencies of detail, be condemned as a hopeless failure. Paley, in one of his charges, says, "Propose one point in one discourse, and stick to it; a hearer never carries away more than one impression." One *uppermost* impression, perhaps, and the Archdeacon's dictum may stand; because, though others are carried away, they are only as ancillary to *that*, confirmatory of *that*, illustrative of *that*. And this centripetal check upon all we introduce into a sermon is what we should always aim at. We are to bring the dispersed parts together, so that they may make one whole; may make their impression on the mind as a whole. The logical steps we have gone through may not have been followed; and only as a succession of undistinguishable, prismatic forms may our most striking thoughts be remembered. But still, if as a nail in a sure place, there have been fastened upon the mind one thoroughly mastered truth, one deeply engrafted lesson, one central and outstanding fact of the Divine government and goodness, our end is answered.

## CHAPTER V.

### COLLECTION AND ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIALS.

WE suppose that now the preacher has decided on his subject, arranged his plans, and collected materials for the filling up of the outline. The next thing to be done is to build up the whole into the discourse which is to edify and please the congregation; or at least, which is to be to the writer of it, the discharge of one of his most important and anxious duties. To some men this is an easy task; and indeed, long experience and a ready mind enable some composers of sermons to collect their materials, and to build them up by one simultaneous process. They take a text, and after arranging the plan, they proceed to write the sermon at once; and as they go on, they introduce such illustrations or topics as may occur. Such facility cannot be expected as a rule, and the great majority of sermon writers must have recourse to a longer and more laborious process.

The plan pursued by some writers is to compose the sermon in the rough, and then to arrange and polish the work afterwards. They draw out all the parts and proportions in a rapid way, writing down in order all the ideas they intend to introduce. This full sketch is then read over, and such alterations as are thought advisable are noted down, to be effected in the second and more complete composition. There can be no doubt that this method is the

very best for young preachers, nor can it be deserted with safety, but after long and successful practice. A written sermon may have all the chief faults of extemporaneous delivery; for what is to hinder written thoughts being crude or repetitions occurring, in that which is committed to paper continuously, as fast as the pen can record it? Every thought should be weighed. It should also be viewed in its harmony with other truths, and in connection with the whole subject in hand. Each illustration must also bear a proportion to the other parts of a sermon; and it is a forgetfulness of this in composing which often compels a preacher to be very long in some divisions, and short in others. This can only be prevented, in ordinary cases, by all the proposed materials being brought together, so that a survey of the whole may indicate what is wanting, and what is redundant.

It is often mortifying to a preacher, whether he reads his sermon or employs an extemporaneous delivery, to find, as he proceeds with his work in the pulpit, that the parts of the discourse are out of proportion and harmony. This defect, and its punishment in a sense of vexation and self-reproach, can be obviated by putting every idea in its right place, and making it occupy only so much room as will bear a proportion to the whole. We do not expect that a sermon for ordinary purposes will be perfect—*totus teres et rotundus*; such exactness is not necessary, nor would it be generally appreciated. But there should be a standard in the mind of the writer of sermons by which every discourse may be measured, and to the perfect idea of

which it should aim at corresponding. If this is the case, gross defects are sure to be avoided; and a disproportionate introduction, unequal divisions, and a hasty peroration, will not often occur. But no ideal notions of what a sermon should be will supersede the necessity of viewing the plan and materials when brought together, and making such alterations as good taste and judgment may suggest.

A plan for a sermon may be perfect, and yet the artistic completion, so as to make a discourse of the logical arrangement determined on, may be a task of the greatest difficulty. A man may conceive a heroic poem in its parts and due proportions, and yet be destitute of taste and imagination to complete it; another may draw the outline of a statue, and still be altogether unable to cut out the almost living and breathing form in the marble. Some minds are fertile, others are barren, some memories never lose what is once grasped, others are slippery and deceitful. And, what is still more important, some men are destitute of imagination, and can never rise above what is common-place to what is poetic, figurative, or warm. By means of a well stored mind, a retentive memory, and some measure of poetic fancy, some preachers can soon clothe a mere skeleton with sinews and flesh, and even "create a soul under the ribs of death;" while others find it difficult to do more than marshal their principal thoughts, like the hard lines of the ground plan of a building.

If to plan and design well is a first requisite for a successful preacher, to give breadth and fulness to an outline is scarcely less important. Indeed in

one sense it is more so; for many hearers will not care for a logical arrangement of the matter, provided there is plenty of it, and presented in a pleasing manner. It is necessary, therefore, that, after fixing upon his subject and laying out his general plan, the preacher should collect his materials for working out his design. These may come from all sources, and the best pulpit orators have been those who have sought all creation through for topics of illustration. The best way is to fix on the subjects early in the week, and then to aim at filling up the plans at all times, and in whatever way we may be engaged. Fine thoughts and appropriate facts and images will often occur in a walk, in a visit to parishioners, and especially in reading books. But then there must be the habit of referring what we meet with to our pulpit labours, and of jotting down at the time what may strike us as pertinent and interesting. Much that bears on this subject is found in the life of the late Rev. Joseph Sortain, one of Lady Huntingdon's preachers at Brighton, who long enjoyed a high character for pulpit eloquence (Nisbet & Co). Mr. Sortain was an extempore speaker, both in the sense in not using notes, and not generally writing his sermons. Like another great Dissenting preacher (Robert Hall), he often suffered much pain, and was compelled by bodily infirmity to give up reading and writing. He had naturally a good memory, and was a keen observer of what passed around him; and his sermons, though delivered extempore, were never the result of a short and hurried preparation. They were, on the contrary,

thought over long and carefully. His biographer says, that the selection of texts and subjects for his sermons was the absorbing theme to which his mind reverted on all occasions and in all circumstances. "While travelling abroad—while on board a steamer, or on a foreign railway, he would suddenly, after a long silence, remark to his wife, 'I have, since I entered this railway (or steamer) got one or more texts, and, what is more, one or more sermons.'" On one of these occasions he could not help exclaiming, "Oh! how thankful I am for the power of abstracting my thoughts from these passing scenes when I desire to do so." He made, during one tour abroad, a course of sermons, and on his return home he preached them, he said, almost exactly as he composed them, without a note to aid his memory. "Great political events; scientific discoveries; antiquarian researches—such as those of Layard, at Nineveh—gave him subjects for sermons; and every day and almost every hour, he was busy in filling up the outlines as facts and ideas came before his mind." Even an incident in which a beneficent Providence was peculiarly apparent, or a national tendency to some one social evil or theological error, suggested themes for the pulpit. He left a large number of pocket books, which, on different occasions, he carried with him on his tours, filled with notes, showing how he gleaned suggestions from all he saw and heard, to be made useful in illustrating some doctrinal statement of Scripture, or in enforcing a practical truth. For example, in one of these books is found the following: "Mem.—The ship *Arctic*. It is said that a passen-

ger offered £30,000 if the boats would put back to take him; they turned to do so, but before they reached him he sank!" He afterwards introduced this circumstance into a sermon, and grounded on it a solemn warning.

We introduce Mr. Sortain's method as suggestive, although few would be able, or even feel it their duty, to follow it. The clergy have to do much besides study sermons, yet the plans adopted by a master of the art cannot be considered without advantage. No doubt, like Mr. Sortain, many clergymen follow his habit. Yet when we make this admission, our mind recurs to such divines as Bishop Andrewes, Archbishop Bramhall, and Dr. South, and we wonder whether *they* were on the look-out day after day, for a brick wherewith to build up the edifice to be exhibited on the Sunday! We are inclined to believe that, generally, their well-stored minds found no difficulty in proving, illustrating, and enforcing, what they set themselves to say to their congregation, and that in their case, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth spake," understanding by "the heart," *more Hebræorum*, all the intellectual and emotional faculties of man. But *ars est celare artem*, and as we were not at the elbow of the worthies we have mentioned, we cannot tell to what extent they laboured *invitâ Minervâ*; or how they paced their studies for an idea, or walked in their gardens in the hope of a speedy germination of an embryo thought somewhat tardy in being born.

But, "there were giants on the earth in those days, men of renown," and all men are not born

with such powers, although expected to produce two sermons a week at least. We fear the gathering of bricks must be practised, even if they have to be made, and without straw too. We have seen the throes and pains with which some men produce their mental progeny, and right pitiful is it to witness such an elaboration of what is to appear before the world for half an hour, and then, probably, to be hid away for ever. There is this consolation, that the great minds of old Demosthenes and Cicero, for instance, could not pour forth eloquence *pro re natá*, but had to build up their conceptions bit by bit, to alter them, rearrange them, commit them to memory, and at last to make them tell on a Greek or Latin audience. So we need not be ashamed, after all, of beginning on Monday morning to prepare for the following Sunday; of getting an idea here or there during the week, and then completing the design on Friday or Saturday, and the clergyman who really intends to be so far master of the art of preaching as to respect himself, and hope for the edification and approval of his hearers, must be content to work like the bee, and collect from all sources what is to make the compound of the useful and sweet. With memorandum book in hand, and whether reading or visiting, or observing nature in his solitary walks, let the preacher jot down whatever may aid him in filling up his "heads," or illustrating the position he intends to lay down and to prove.

To aid in this accumulation of topics, old writers on oratory laid down many rules. Some of these are given by Claude in his *Essay on the*



*Composition of a Sermon*, and we will quote a passage in illustration of what we mean. He says, "To open more particularly some sources of observation, or topics, remark everything that may help you think and facilitate invention. You may rise from species to genus, or descend from genus to species. You may remark the different characters of a virtue commanded, or of a vice prohibited. You may inquire whether the subject in question be relative to any other, or whether it do not suppose something not expressed. You may reflect on the person speaking or acting, or on the condition of the person speaking or acting. You may observe time, place, persons addressed, and see whether there be any useful considerations arising from either. You may consider the principles of a word or action, or the good and bad consequences that follow. You may attend to the end proposed in a speech or action, and see if there be anything remarkable in the manner of speaking or acting. You may compare words or actions with others similar, and remark the difference of words and actions on different occasions. You may oppose words and actions to contrary words and actions, either by contrasting speaker or hearers. You may examine the foundations and causes of words and actions, in order to develop the truth or falsehood, equity or iniquity of them. You may sometimes make suppositions, refute objections, and distinguish characters of grandeur, majesty, meanness, infirmity, necessity, utility, evidence and so on. You may advert to degrees of more or less and to different interests. You may distinguish, define,

and in a word, by turning your text on every side, you may obtain various methods of elucidating it." Here are sources of topics! And Claude says, "I will give you examples of them all."

We have no intention of going through this long catalogue of topics given by Claude, but will leave our readers to find examples of them for themselves. But we may mention one or two of the more obvious sources whence illustrative matter may be derived, for filling up the outline of a sermon. Take, for example, the large class of observations which may be called *personal*, and that in two senses—in reference to the writer of the text chosen, and to ourselves who are to profit by it. Of the first an idea can be formed if we select a text and apply the rule. Let it then be *Christ's Ascension a Guide to our Affections*, Col. iii. 1: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above," etc. In the discussion of this subject, we may endeavour to place ourselves in the circumstances of St. Paul and the Colossians, and from their point of view gather many topics which may be thus considered personal ones. As to the Apostle, he left no doubt in what sense he understood his own precept. He gave up all for Christ, reputation, friends, worldly advantages, and personal comfort. But while he relinquished much, he gained more. He sought and found "things which were above," which, though unseen, became to him by faith the most substantial realities. He communed with Christ, and caught His spirit, and imitated His example; and while he was a most active man in the performance of every duty, his

heart was in heaven, with his ascended Lord. This is evident in all his Epistles, and from the Apostle's own conduct and experience we may gather the very best comment on his words. If we turn from St. Paul, the writer of the Epistle, to the Colossians, to whom it was addressed, topics may be derived from their political and social position, their state of civilization, their former religion, their temptations and their other difficulties. Much aid in this point of view can be derived from such works as Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Letters of St. Paul*, in which the references to the public and private circumstances of the believers whom St. Paul addressed are carefully and graphically unfolded. To "set our affections on things above," is hard in proportion as "things below" are attractive, and at Colossæ there was very much to attract and charm the worldly mind. Then there was the persecution, which, more or less, the converted heathen had to experience from their relatives and connections, whose practices must necessarily have been condemned by their own. As we are referring to the Church at Colossæ, we may further illustrate what we mean by topics which are personal in relation to those addressed, by alluding to some peculiar religious opinions which St. Paul glances at, as taught at Colossæ, and apparently received by the believers there. We find that in this Epistle, St. Paul warns the Colossians against the following different errors. "First, a combination of angel-worship and asceticism. Secondly, a self-styled *philosophy or gnosis* which depreciated Christ. Thirdly, a rigid observance of

Jewish festivals and Sabbaths." It is evident that a great number of texts in this short Epistle must receive light from a knowledge of these facts, and our hearers are always much interested in such information. A slight knowledge of the Gnosticism which pervaded the East and parts of Greece at the Christian era, will often supply valuable topics. We will quote a short passage from Conybeare and Howson as an example of what we mean: "The most probable view seems to be that some Alexandrian Jew had appeared at Colossæ, professing a belief in Christianity, and imbued with the Greek 'philosophy' of the school of Philo, but combining with it the Rabbinical theosophy and angelology which afterwards was embodied in the Cabbala, and an extravagant asceticism, which also afterwards distinguished several sects of the Gnostics. In short, one of the first heresiarchs of the incipient Gnosticism had begun to pervert the Colossians from the simplicity of their faith. We have seen how great was the danger to be apprehended from this source, at the stage which the Church had now reached; especially in a Church which consisted, as that of Colosse did, principally of Gentiles; and that, too, in Phrygia where the national character was so prone to a mystic fanaticism."

Let the student of the art of preaching exercise himself in this way, and endeavour to make the life and times of the sacred writers yield materials for the composition of sermons. They will be found very abundant, in proportion as the sermon writer has a mind expanded by a knowledge of the

past, and especially of the times of our Lord and His Apostles.

We now turn to observations, or topics, derived from sources personal to the preacher and his hearers. There is a style of pulpit address known as experimental preaching, and it is especially patronised by men who aim at popularity, in all denominations of the visible Church. High Calvinists often do little more than anatomise and probe and expose what are called the frames and feelings of a believing soul; and what is subjective is the staple article of their addresses. This one-sided kind of preaching is not what we mean when we speak of topics drawn from personal experience. Our conception is far wider and more generic, including all that can be made to illustrate a subject in the circumstances of the preacher and his hearers. The experimental preaching we have just alluded to, recognises the mental and moral phenomena of those only who are presumed to be the elect of God, or, the subjects of Divine influences and teachings; while what we advocate is a reference to men as men—to their common pursuits, and their hopes and fears, joys and sorrows. In the discussion of a text, whatever links it with the hearers, either spiritually, intellectually, or socially, may be taken advantage of, sometimes for the sake of attracting greater attention, but principally for gaining to Christian principles and practices the judgment and the affections.

But let us not be misunderstood as though we undervalued that kind of experimental preaching which has its sources in the religious convictions

and emotions common to all spiritually-minded persons. We may well say that the soul has fled from our pulpits if its utterances are not those of personal love to our Divine Lord, of a heart experienced in the school of conflict and acquainted with the hopes and fears of a really religious spirit. On this subject we may again quote the Rev. Daniel Moore in his *Thoughts on Preaching*. He is speaking of the importance of bringing prominently into sermons the emotions and processes of the Christian's inner life, and he then asks whence a knowledge of such experiences is to be derived. The answer in part is: "There is one source of truth and power in drawing these portraiture of the inner life, for the want of which no extent of pastoral observation, nor even any theoretical acquaintance with Holy Scripture, can compensate. We mean that which is self-supplied; which wells up from the deep springs of the man's own spirit; which makes it sure that the portrait shall be natural, because we have gone for the original to the diversities of our inner life, and to the teachings of our own heart. Experimental preaching is the preaching of soul to soul; and one might almost as soon expect an electric spark to be elicited from an uncharged battery, as for the preaching of experimental truth to profit where the experience is all on one side. No; such preaching is not for the unconverted man. Simulate it he may; and, to a certain extent, successfully. He may borrow largely from the quaintness of Puritan theology or incorporate into his discourses the "high nonsense" of German spiritualism, or turn

into bad prose the most spiritual parts of the poetry of the *Christian Year* — careful to intermingle with this pseudo-heart-painting certain hackneyed religious phrases; or else taking shelter from his own obscurities in some equally hackneyed Scripture text." It is admitted that even in this way good may be done, and the case of Balaam is mentioned, but in a glowing passage it is shewn that to discourse of such topics from our own heart will be sure "to awaken a genial and grateful response in a thousand Christ-touched hearts." All that is true; and only men of such experience can make "experimental preachers in the best sense." But this is not all we mean by experimental topics. Innumerable observations will arise from our personal relations to the subject and those of our hearers, and the more these are employed the greater will be the interest excited in our congregations.

Let the text be Romans vii. 24: "O, wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then, whether we consider the words as expressive of Christian experience, or as that of a man enlightened in his judgment, yet not able to bow his will to that of God, we can draw largely for illustration from what we know of ourselves and others. The

"Video meliora proboque  
Deteriora sequor"

will come in with good effect, and so will all those common topics regarding the bondage of the will with its attendant miseries, from which nothing but the grace of God can set us free.

## CHAPTER VI.

### DELIVERY OF A SERMON. EXTEMPORANEOUS, BY MEMORY, AND READ.

WE now turn from the substance of a pulpit discourse to its delivery ; a matter which has always been considered of great importance, and to which great attention has lately been directed. In forming opinions on this question, two extremes are to be avoided. On the one hand dulness must not be defended, nor must any indifference be felt or expressed as to the value of preaching, or the duty of trying to please our audience. It has been said that God's House is called the House of Prayer, but never the House of Preaching, and on the strength of this aphorism some have really neglected all the niceties of pulpit address, and rested satisfied with the baldest and most meagre exhortation. Where a high style of ceremonial has been adopted, or what has been called the sacramental system is exaggerated, this neglect of preaching has sometimes furnished just ground of suspicion and complaint. There could not be a worse illustration of the evil of going to extremes. Preaching is an ordinance of God, and in all ages it has been accompanied with a special blessing ; it cannot therefore be undervalued without blame to the priest, and an amount of injury to the flock. No popular errors on the subject, and no personal



prejudices on our own part arising from the abuse of preaching, can ever make it less our duty to cultivate the art of pulpit address that we may edify our hearers.

On the other hand the study of pulpit delivery may be excessive, and the substance be thought less of than the oratory. When we consider the place occupied by preaching among many Christian people, and the comparative little attention given by them to other parts of divine service, we cannot but feel that harm is thus done, for the proportions of the divine pattern, as given in the Scripture, are not observed. Then, again, what can be more offensive to a person of refined Christian taste than the abuse of the pulpit by many men who are esteemed popular. What is more opposed to the chaste simplicity which *ought* to reign where Christianity prevails, than a turgid eloquence, a pompous declamation, or an accommodation of style and address to the tastes of a vulgar audience? The tricks of speech are *always* offensive, even when employed in *vili corpore*; but never so bad as when used in the pulpit. To our minds, the claptrap oratory of a "cheap Jack" in a fair, is far preferable to what we have sometimes heard in the pulpit—more respectable and more congruous. The scourge of small thongs employed by our Lord against the money-changers would be most appropriately used on the backs of some religious mountebanks we have known, whose only aim seemed to be to *amuse*. From this kind of delivery may the Church of England ever be preserved!

Avoiding these two extremes of indifference to

interesting preaching, and its undue exaltation and meretricious performance, we should aim at a natural delivery of the matter we have prepared. In this, as in everything else, the rule holds good that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well. If the commonest ideas may be made acceptable by well-chosen words and a pleasing manner, how desirable it is to cultivate them. A great deal may be done by industry to overcome natural defects, and to acquire excellencies and graces. The first thing to be done is to know our defects, and a judicious friend is invaluable in the matter. Many preachers, it is to be feared, exhibit faults of which they are altogether unconscious, acquired, perhaps at college, or still earlier in life; and as they have never been told of them, how could they correct them? All we can do, by writing, is to lay down some general principles, and we shall, in future papers, discuss the various points of the delivery of a sermon, such as extemporaneous speaking, the management of the voice, action, etc. Extemporaneous speaking, as a method of sermon delivery, will occupy a good deal of the present volume, and for the better elucidation of the matter, we will divide what we have to advance in sections, under our seventh chapter, as follows.

## CHAPTER VII.

### EXTEMPORANEOUS PREACHING.

#### Section 1.—*Definition of Extempore Preaching— Knowledge of Holy Scripture.*

WE have much to say on this subject, for although it is often discussed, there appears to be a good deal of what is crude, and even false, in the popular conceptions of it. The very terms extemporaneous and extempore, which so much concern the subject of delivery, are ambiguous, for an extempore sermon may be a written one or not ; and the word may refer either to an unpremeditated delivery, or the mere absence of a book from which the sermon is read. We shall therefore premise, in the first place, that by a sermon delivered extempore we merely mean one which is not read. This is the normal notion we attach to the word, although, of course, a sermon may be extempore in its thoughts and composition, as well as in its delivery. There is no reason whatever, in *rerum natura*, why a complete discussion and application of a subject should not be accomplished *pro re nata*, and be as perfect as it could be, had days being devoted to its composition. Provided there is the requisite facility in delivering what is in the mind, it then only demands that the proposed subject should be really mastered, and thoroughly comprehended, by the preacher, for him to get up

without warning and deliver it effectively from the pulpit. Something of the kind is done every day in circumstances trivial and common. How many good speeches are delivered at public meetings, at vestries, at boards of guardians, which were never thought of an hour before ; and, in private life, conversations are often sustained logically, and even brilliantly, when they are all occasional and unlooked for. All depends on the degree of knowledge of the subject to be spoken upon or talked about ; and if that is well understood, an extemporaneous speech is practically found to be easy. Nor does a public man, whether a clergyman, or a barrister, or a member of Parliament, enjoy the ease he might do in his profession, unless he has this faculty of expressing easily, and without preparation, what he comprehends. The first grand requisite, therefore, for a preacher is to be thoroughly “ up ” with his subjects ; and we venture to express an opinion, the result of much observation and experience, that mental poverty is too often the source of preaching difficulties, both in the preparation and the delivery. We converse freely, because we know what we are about ; we write with toil and labour from knowing but little of our theme. There are exceptions to this statement, but we believe it to be substantially correct. A full mind, the result of much study and reading and meditation on what we may call the literature of the profession, is the prime requisite for an easy delivery of our thoughts. Take, for example, one department of this literature, the Holy Scriptures. Clergymen ought to be generally familiar with the Bible, and with

dogmatic theology, so as to be able to produce proofs and illustrative texts to bear on any common religious topics. Where there is this competent acquaintance with Holy Scripture, not only is time saved, but a confidence is felt in quoting ; and as it is the Bible which supplies to the preacher his greater number of topics, ease and facility will be in proportion to his acquaintance with it. So with systematic divinity and general interpretation. Some divines have the whole scenery, so to speak, of the sacred writers before them, so that topics come easily to their minds ; while others come to the consideration of texts, as it were for the first time, as bald and isolated propositions. Thus, the parable of Dives and Lazarus conveys a lesson against covetousness, and teaches the uselessness of worldly possessions to final happiness ; and a preacher might at once infer these points if he came upon the passage in St. Luke for the first time. But how different are these bare propositions from the luminous conception which a good Biblical scholar will have of the parable. The nature of Eastern homes, the character of its feasts, and of its hospitality, tell much both with regard to the rich man and Lazarus. Texts seen in their connection thus supply topics ; and no man can be a ready preacher, either in writing or delivering his sermon, who is not furnished in this way.

Section 2.—*Advantages of an Extemporaneous Address to both Preacher and Congregation.*

Having defined what we mean by extemporaneous preaching, viz., the absence of a written

composition, we must next inquire how far it is desirable or important to cultivate this method of delivery. And the subject has two aspects—one regarding the preacher himself, and the other his auditors. The mere time spent in writing out a sermon fully is a serious matter in these days of pressing parish business and intellectual activity; and there can be no doubt that a man who is able to do *well* without that expenditure of so many hours and so much labour, has an inestimable advantage. To be able to “build up” a sermon while occupied in other things, as during pastoral visits or walking for exercise, and then to preach from the memoranda thus gathered up, is, perhaps, a rare attainment, yet it is possessed by many, as the result of natural ability or practice. And the comfort this habit confers, and the command it gives over one’s time, render it desirable for all. We only now allude to this in passing, and will return to the topic more particularly by and by; our present purpose is rather to consider the relative advantages of a sermon delivered extempore over a written one, as regards the congregation.

As a matter of public opinion and taste, congregations greatly vary on this subject. We know parishes where there is a strong prejudice against extemporaneous delivery, and many people are seriously annoyed when they see a preacher without a book. This is, of course, an unreasonable prejudice, but it has probably been produced by witnessing the failure of attempts of the kind, or by the rambling and unconnected method of some extemporaneous preachers. On the other hand,

this method of delivery is more often thought too highly of, and the skill of a preacher is tested almost solely by his power of using it. This is especially the case in large towns where a popular preacher is almost identical with an extemporaneous one. This feeling is partly produced, and certainly strengthened by the fact, that in large towns men are found capable of speaking freely on other subjects, and the pulpit is therefore compared with other spheres in which elocution is employed. "He preaches extempore," is often said as a high compliment and a passport to favour, and certainly those churches in populous localities where this method is practised are generally the best attended. This fact ought perhaps to be attributed as much to the incidental accompaniments of extempore preaching as to the manner itself; for there is certainly more room for a warm address and the occasional use of topics, which present themselves without previous thought, than when a sermon is read. Yet it would be wrong to come to a decision on the matter from these data alone; we must look a little further below the surface before we can decide whether extemporaneous preaching is worthy of being made a prime object by a young clergyman.

The object of preaching is to edify the people—the meaning of which is, to warn them, guard them against dangers, instruct them in the doctrines of the faith, comfort them in the troubles of life, and strengthen in them the hopes of a happy immortality. There cannot be a doubt that all this could be well accomplished by reading the Scriptures

and expounding them and enforcing them without any attempt at oratory. A priest might seat himself as a judge does, or as our bishops often do under the chancel arch, and effectually discharge all these duties in a quiet way—as a father might at the head of his family. But this kind of edification is not what is generally contemplated when men talk of preachers and preaching. They mean what pleases their fancy, arrests their attention by its novelty, or excites their passions. They look for that kind of interest from the pulpit which they find in newspapers, light literature, and rhetorical displays on the platform or at the bar. There is only one thing which can, with any force of argument, be said to require a warm eloquence in the pulpit, and that is the arresting the attention of unbelievers, or arousing the notoriously wicked. But are ordinary congregations composed of such characters? No! And we believe that in any congregation in England as much good would be done, year by year, by the calm enforcement of Holy Scripture above described, as by any amount of pulpit oratory. Those who go for excitement would not be gratified, but they might, if they listened, be benefited.

Section 3.—*Extemporaneous Preaching comparatively a rare attainment.*

Pulpit eloquence, or effective extemporaneous preaching, then, cannot be considered necessary for the ordinary ends which the services of the Church of Christ contemplate. They have their proper arenas for action, and they are necessary in special circumstances. And, as if to mark out clearly their



exceptional use, God has conferred these abilities upon few. We believe that no amount of study and persevering labour would enable some men to speak effectively without a sermon before them ; and that for a vast number more, all efforts would fail in securing such a degree of accuracy as would be thought preferable to mere reading. When, therefore, we endeavour to aid those who may wish to become extempore preachers, we appeal to a comparatively limited number ; at the same time, the rules we may give will not be without their use to those who may never attain to anything like excellence.

Those who have carefully marked the course of our previous observations will be prepared to hear us express the opinion that, as a rule, written sermons must ever be the chief performances of the clergy of the Church of England. To extemporise *well* is, as we have shown, a rare gift, and it would be mere folly to expect the greater part of our preachers to acquire the art. Now, if extemporaneous delivery were manifestly more useful to the people, and more advantageous to the Church at large, than its opposite, it would be a subject for regret that it could not be generally practised. But, on the contrary, written sermons are, in the present imperfect state of human nature and Christian society, for the most part, manifestly to be preferred to those delivered extemporaneously ; and the arrangements of Divine Providence in dispensing its gifts are thus, as in all cases, in beautiful harmony with the wants of the Church and the best interests of mankind.

*Correctness of thought* is more certainly secured

by written sermons. Not only is time given to weigh the ideas as they arise in the mind and are committed to paper, but they are subjected to the criticism of the eye, and can be altered, rearranged, or rewritten, as circumstances may suggest. Ex-tempore speakers often have new ideas which seem to be pertinent and logical, and utterance is given to them with the conviction that they are so; but calm reflection afterwards suggests that, if they had occurred in the privacy of the study, they would have been modified if not excluded. This judgment passed upon his own thoughts by the preacher may not, in many cases, be pronounced by the hearers; but that is not the question. To a conscientious man it will not be so important to know what the audience may think, as what *the truth* may be on the matter in hand. In ordinary speeches on a platform, or in common conversation, it is necessary that correctness of thought should be aimed at. But in preaching the Gospel, which is, in fact, proclaiming the thoughts of God, there ought to be a most jealous regard of correctness of thinking. It is to be feared that much mistiness of conception, and much confusion in the statement of doctrines and precepts is allowed to pass by preachers because they execute too rapidly and with too little preparation. But we need not say that this is a fault to be most carefully eschewed by all right-minded men.

*Clearness of expression* is equally important with correctness of thought, and it is attained by writing a sermon; or we ought rather to say, it *may* be so. Minds differ much in their logical cha-

racter, and so does delivery as to its choice of words, and their arrangement. To some it comes naturally to express what they think in suitable phraseology; and whether they write or speak extempore, they never go far wrong. But it is far from being so with all whose office requires them to instruct others; since many clever men, as mathematicians, classical scholars, and those who have edified others by their writings, are often slow to speak, and have no facility in arranging their words; and if such men speak without book they are apt to be indistinct, parenthetical, and circuitous in their addresses. We know that a writer may be all this, as we have proof enough every day; yet, when a sermon is written, and its sentences appear one by one before us, a confused style may be better avoided. As sermons appeal, for the most part, to plain people and common minds, to be distinct and clear is of prime importance. One reason that Holy Scripture is so easily comprehended by the people is, that its words are so well chosen. Let a writer of sermons take the style of the Bible as his guide, and gradually remove all long words and equivocal expressions. This can be done in writing a sermon in a way in which it never can be accomplished when pen and paper are seldom resorted to.

#### Section 4.—*Dangers Incident to Extemporaneous Preaching.*

Another advantage of a written sermon is, that the preacher avoids *provoking and humiliating mistakes*. Sometimes the most practised extempore

speakers will blunder, become confused, call back their words, and in other ways exhibit a defect in their matter or their utterances, and those in the congregation who are sensitive in their sympathies are put to much pain thereby. But it is not always that the preacher's defects are known to the hearers; for he may pass through a good deal of mental conflict and mortification of spirit without its being known to any one but himself. On this subject we will again quote a short extract from the Rev. Daniel Moore:—"One of the first troubles of a public speaker is to catch himself tripping. He has stumbled upon a wrong or inappropriate word; or he has expressed himself in a way which, almost before the words have fallen from his lips, he sees will lay his statement open to objection; or, lastly, owing to some ill-managed qualifications in the middle of a sentence, he has let go the thread of his argument, and he sees nothing but an ugly *anacoluthon* before him—half the sentence unfinished, and the other half hanging upon nothing. These things greatly disconcert him. In the case of the unsuitable word or statement he can hardly avoid, for the next few sentences, yielding to an undercurrent of speculation in his own mind as to the extent of mischief his mistake may involve, and for a sentence or two he is considering whether he ought to go back and set it right. More commonly, however, the consciousness of dilemma betrays itself in increased rapidity of utterance, in an agitated impatience to get on to something else, as if he would hurry away from his misfortune, or bury it out of sight of his hearers by an overlaid heap of

words. It is almost needless to say that by such means the evil is aggravated, and that the confusion will increase the longer he goes on."

Section 5.—*Extemporaneous Preaching may be Successfully Cultivated.*

We have placed before our readers most of the impediments which prevent there being many successful extemporaneous speakers. Nature denies the gift to vast numbers; and very often, when there is nothing *in rerum naturâ* to forbid its acquirement, circumstances of education and position effectually do so. But we now proceed to the more hopeful side of the subject; and will endeavour to assist those who are sufficiently self-reliant to *attempt* to excel in a department where so many fail. Art, and study, and perseverance can no doubt do much to overcome the obstacles in the way of a free delivery of a sermon, and the advantages of such an attainment are great enough to warrant any reasonable expenditure of time and labour upon it.

We think, however, that it will generally be found that men who turn out to be successful public speakers have had an incidental sort of training in early life. Young men in respectable positions are often called upon to "say a few words" at public or private gatherings, and the possession of a "talent" is frequently indicated in this way. When once a speech has been made with some degree of fluency and ease, the path is opened up for further triumphs, and probably a debating

society, or some more public arena is afterwards found for the cultivation of the gift thus accidentally ascertained. But this practice must not be considered as arising solely from some peculiar natural talent, for it may be a cause, as well as an effect; and, on this account, every opportunity should be embraced by young men who are to enter public life, of gaining confidence and ease in the expression of their ideas. Quite apart from any professional destination, the art of speaking readily and freely in ordinary life is an accomplishment of no small value, and schools, both public and private, should hold out every inducement for its cultivation. If young boys were accustomed to recitation from memory, or to act dramas, the *mauvaise honte* so peculiar to Englishmen would be counteracted. Natural talents would thus be discovered, and where they did not exist, there would be, at the least, something to discourage awkwardness, and give a pleasing confidence.

Section 6.—*Extemporaneous Preaching Cultivated by Nonconformists.*

The greater part of Dissenting ministers speak extempore, and it is worthy of observation that the ability to do so is ascertained and drawn out in some such way as we have described. Perhaps one of the first signs of a fitness for the future office of preacher, which attracts the notice of friends and fixes the destiny of the youth, is a "talking talent," exhibited probably in an address at a Sunday school, or on some similar occasion. When once the work

of the ministry is contemplated, there is a course of training into which the young man is introduced, almost without any will of his own. It is surprising at how early an age young men ascend the pulpit among the various sects of Nonconformists. Years before they are thought qualified to take the charge of a congregation, and even before they enter on the usual studies, occupying three or four years, they will be found taking Sunday duty in villages, or haranguing Sunday schools, or giving "an address" at a meeting for prayer. For four or five years, probably two or three times a week, the future Dissenting preacher thus exercises his gifts. And among the older communities, no man is thought fitted for the work unless he receives "a call" from the society to which he belongs. He has to preach before the "members of the Church" for six evenings, more or less, and on the degree of fluency with which he expresses himself depends his success, and the permission granted to him to enter into the ministry. Probably this cautious system is now defunct, as being not liberal enough for the taste of the age, but it was in full operation fifty years ago.

We need not wonder, then, that a talent for extempore speaking, when possessed naturally, should find its way among Dissenters; nor that, being discovered, it should increase and grow. Little of this kind can come into operation in Church life; for we, as clergy, rather discourage the "talking talent" among our young men. We do not wish to see this wise reserve altered; and therefore things must remain much as they are, unless

schools and the universities can be induced to take the matter up, and give some greater encouragement to the cultivation of the art of speaking. However this may be, it is certain that a man who aims at preaching extempore, must not shrink from any opportunity of exercising himself in public. However painful to him, he must "get up" when asked to do so; either to gain confidence and become more qualified; or to discover in time that his calling is not in that way, and so to divert his energies into other channels.

Among Nonconformists extemporaneous prayer is much cultivated; it is, indeed, regarded as a natural development of religious life, and there can be no doubt that the habit, when formed by young men, often leads directly to the exercise of it in the pulpit. We regard this subject as so important that we shall treat of it in a separate chapter.

#### Section 7.—*Comparative ease of Preaching Extemporaneous or Written Sermons.*

With a written sermon, a preacher is comparatively free from the necessity of mental exertion. He may *feel* deeply, and become excited with what he is reading, and he may use a certain amount of oratorical intonation and gesture; but he is not called to *think* as he proceeds, and he is in no danger of wandering into generalities because he has lost the thread of his discourse.\* Whatever the state

\* A striking proof of the truth of what has just been advanced, was furnished by the preaching of the late Dr. Chalmers. It was our privilege to hear him deliver a discourse at the chapel of the late Dr. Pye Smith at Homerton, nearly fifty years ago,



of his mind may be, whether light or depressed, clear or clouded, the sentences of the sermon are all arranged beforehand, and no mishap can throw them into confusion. But an extempore speaker is very differently situated, and a hundred things may throw him out of the track he has proposed to follow, disorder his ideas, and make him hesitate in his delivery. Just in proportion, therefore, as a preacher is independent of written notes, is it requisite that he should be master of his subject, and secure a firm grasp of what he intends to set before the people. Get, therefore, a clear and distinct idea of *what is to be done* in the proposed sermon. If it is to be doctrinal, the mind should see the subject well defined; if it is practical, the virtue to be enforced or the sin to be guarded against must be plainly marked out. Cloudy and imperfect views of such matters may be overcome or concealed in a manuscript far easier than they can in oral delivery. When the topic is well understood, there is less danger of losing sight of it or of its relations, or of speaking mistily upon it. But there must also be a firm grasp of the divisions which have been determined upon. By this we do not merely mean that the technical or formal heads

and the circumstance is deeply engraved on our memory. A prejudice against written sermons was a part of our education at that time, and it received a salutary shock by the way in which it was driven into the back ground by the method of Dr. Chalmers' address. We have noticed this fact before, and will now only add that the excitement of the preacher was evinced by the profuse perspiration which often poured from his forehead down to his book, accompanied by the energetic thumps which occasionally descended upon his manuscript.

must be remembered, for a few manuscript notes will retain them easily enough ; but that the mind should grasp the logical arrangement, and thus, seeing the proportions of the part distinctly, be the less liable to throw them into confusion. When the subject and the divisions are thus familiar, there cannot be any very serious break-down in the extempore discussion. The order of the ideas may not be so logical as could be desired, and there may be a forgetfulness of some things which were to have been brought forward ; but with the great landmarks, so to speak, ever in view, the traveller will easily return from little aberrations to the right hand or to the left.

It thus appears that to be an extempore speaker a man should be a clear thinker. He should also be rapid in his judgments and deductions. It is well known to those who preach extempore that thoughts are often originated in the mind as the discourse proceeds, and that some of the very best parts of sermons are sometimes quite original to the preacher himself. The pertinency of these new suggestions must be determined on as they arise, and before they are allowed to appear in the places they are to fill ; and it is obvious that this process demands a quick power of reasoning as well as an active fancy. This rapid decision will be correct in proportion as the subject of the sermon is firmly grasped by the mind, and *vice versa*. It is, therefore, of no use to attempt to speak extemporaneously with any success, or any comfort to either preacher or hearer, unless logical habits are cultivated. It is the want of such habits

which so often brings extempore preaching into disrepute and contempt. A power to express in words what is thought of is one thing, but it is a higher faculty to be able to reason so clearly as to see the inaptness of premises and the falseness of conclusions, *pro re natâ*, as the discourse is proceeding.

Section 8.—*Great care in Preparation required.*

What we have now said will shew that we do not consider extempore preaching as in any sense a substitute for correct thinking, or as superseding a careful preparation. We require that a man should know beforehand what he means to say; and that when new ideas present themselves, he should not let them be exhibited as a matter of course, but that he should be able to subject them to a previous scrutiny. All this demands some mental capacity, and much studious habit. Nothing can ordinarily excuse hasty preparation, and we can indorse the opinions of the Rev. Daniel Moore on this point: "Wherefore let our last protest on this subject be against hasty preparation. The cheaply-produced sermon, whether spoken or written, is always the same—a calamity, a wrong, an offence both to earth and heaven. It is not only that there is the absence of the true Araunah spirit in the offering, there is an evil beyond that; that which costs us nothing in the way of disappointment, and distress, and famine of the mind, may cost our hearers a great deal. They come to us not as to 'instructors in Christ' only, but as to 'fathers;' fathers charged with the distribution of

heaven's bounty, and having at our disposal bread enough and to spare. Is it nothing that we spread for them a table of empty husks? 'If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?'"

To compose a sermon for the edification of Christian people is a serious task. Whether it is to be read, or delivered *memoriter*, or extemporaneously, in all cases it should be approached with reverence and humility—reverence, on account of the greatness and importance of the theme; humility, because of the relative insignificance and insufficiency of the workman. St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, lets us see how his spirit was affected by the great duty of preaching the Gospel. In one place (2 Cor. ii. 16) he says: "To the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life. *And who is sufficient for these things?*" In another (2 Cor. iii. 5) he disclaims his own adequate power, in similar language: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." Indeed, the results which are to be expected from Christian preaching are so out of proportion to the means, looked at in their human aspects, that in no sphere of mental or benevolent labour would self-confidence and conceit be so misplaced. Anything like ostentation, or pride, or self-gratulation should, therefore, be guarded against by a clergyman in his pulpit preparations, and checked in their earliest manifestations.

Section 9.—*Dangers attending freedom of Speech.*

As the human instrument is brought forward more prominently when a sermon is delivered without notes, there is, of course, greater temptation to vain confidence, or a spirit too self-reliant. Oratory is a gift, superadded to the mere power of composing a good discourse, and its possessors have too often been lifted up unduly by its possession. The inflated style and vapid materials which some extemporaneous preachers exhibit to their congregations are the result of this self-conceit; for a man who thinks little or no preparation necessary for a thing so solemn as a sermon, necessarily wants modesty and a sense of what is fit and proper, and will easily be led to talk nonsense. Preachers of this class, and perhaps some of a better stamp, have been known to boast of the little time and thought their sermons cost them—a matter they would rather have concealed, had they possessed the spirit of a true Christian philosophy.

As a safeguard against anything like this want of humble seriousness, one who is about to deliver an extemporaneous address should narrowly watch his motives in taking this course. He should ask himself for what reason he adopts a plan different to the usual one; and if he can reply that he hopes to do more good by it, or that he will save time for other purposes, or that the method is more easy to himself and more promotive of his own comfort, he need not fear any evil consequences from employing it. But if a love of popularity, or a desire to be distinguished above his brethren, or a latent idea

that to preach in this way is more clever, should be detected as motives, let the preacher pause and consider how applicable to him are the Apostle's words: "Let nothing be done through strife and vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." Let the dangers and inconveniences and the frequent failures of an extemporaneous mode of address be often thought of to check this self-gratulation. And, above all, let a spirit of reverence for things sacred pervade the mind of the preacher as he sits down to arrange his sermon, or as he collects his materials amidst the more active duties of his calling. And let him remember how like "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal" is mere readiness of utterance, unless what is uttered is good. For while the gift of a ready flow of words is to be valued it is only as the words are well chosen. A feeling of disgust is always produced in sensible persons when they hear a man talk nonsense, however voluble he may be, and however well supplied with words. Thoughts like these will check a tendency to pride, and prevent the extempore speaker from such an undue exaltation of his gift as would lead to an imperfect and careless preparation.

From many excellent remarks on this subject which occur in the writings of those who have treated of ministerial duties and dangers, we select the following, by Dr. Daniel Danna, who wrote on the importance of seriousness to the Christian Minister: "The true minister lives less for the present than for the future. He has eternity in his eye. The celebrated remark of an ancient

painter, 'I paint for eternity,' has more of the shadow than the substance of the sublime, for it contemplated only 'a fancied life in others' breath.' But on the lips of a Christian minister a similar sentiment has all the beauty and grace of simple truth. He lives and acts, he preaches and prays, for eternity. And millions of ages hence, his life and actions, his sermons and his prayers, may be remembered by beings besides himself with unutterable joy or grief ! This is enough ; the minister who forgets this may be a trifler and will be a trifler. He may trifle formally and gravely, but he will trifle still. The minister to whom this single vast idea is habitually present, and present as a reality, may trifle if he can ; but it is impossible. He will be serious, engaged, devoted, absorbed—absorbed in the great object of meeting, with joy, the favoured, happy beings whom his fidelity has instrumentally saved." Thoughts like these will prevent us from being proud of our gifts, and cause us to use them with a trembling anxiety to do our best for the honour of God and the welfare of souls.

Section 10.—*Extemporaneous Speaking a Natural Endowment.*

Bautain says there is an instinct which tells a man what he is capable of doing, and there can be no doubt that among the clergy the desire to speak extemporaneously is often a sign of an undeveloped power of doing so. "It is with eloquence," he says, "as with all art ; to succeed in it you must

be made for it, or called to it incessantly by a mysterious tendency or inexplicable attraction which influences the whole being, which ultimately turns to its object as the magnetic needle to the north." If there is anything of this instinctive notion or desire, it is worth while to cultivate it, and to see to what it will lead.

The very first requisite is *the ability to speak with ease on ordinary topics* in the common intercourse of life. A man would be most unwise to attempt an extemporaneous sermon who is incapable of conversing with some degree of fluency. At a clerical meeting, for instance, an observer could easily select from its dozen or twenty members those who would have any chance of succeeding as extempore preachers; some can express their thoughts easily and pertinently, while others halt at every sentence, and only succeed in making themselves understood by a process laborious to themselves and painful to others. If a clergyman is conscious of having greater power than others in this respect, he may be sure that it is worth his while to cultivate it still further. What has been hitherto natural to him, may be cultivated as an art, and he may seek all occasions of exercising and improving his gift in the society of his friends, at meetings, or by occasional addresses at schools and lecture-rooms. By the help of a proper modesty, and the constant remembrance of what is due to Christian courtesy, a man may be secretly improving the art of speaking while apparently joining in a natural way in the conversation of others. "I will do the very best I can," should be his constant resolve; "I will aim at being clear



in the most commonplace remarks; I will allow of no slovenly expressions, and no ill-formed sentences; and by trying to think clearly on all that is the subject of conversation, I will strive to avoid the risk of speaking obscurely." If such an artistic method is persevered in, one of two results must follow,—either it will be evident to the tyro that he has mistaken his power, or he will become more conscious of it, and be induced to persevere.

Section 11.—*The Habit of Composition necessary.*

Careful writing is another means of gaining facility of utterance. Few men have become good speakers who have not been in early life diligent with the pen in expressing their thoughts, rounding their periods, and pruning away redundancies.

Perhaps it is best to let this kind of exercise concern general topics rather than those which will be employed in the pulpit; and we would advise the beginner to write essays rather than sermons. Greater freedom will be attained in this way; and the fluency acquired by writing on matters merely secular, will easily transfer itself to more sacred themes. Having written out the theme, it should be read aloud, and every defect which strikes the reader should be carefully noticed and removed. Sentences only written cannot exhibit their euphony, or the want of it, as they do when read aloud. By such practice the ear will be trained to detect blemishes, and, as a sure result, they will gradually be avoided, till they become almost impossible. A young performer on a musical instrument may allow

a discord to pass without any excruciating sensation; but the more he practices the finer his ear becomes, until it will be an exception for him to perpetrate a discord at all.

The Rev. Daniel Moore thus refers to the necessity of habitual and careful writing, in the training of an extempore preacher: "Among the ancients this was strongly insisted upon. 'The pen is the orator's best instructor,' says Cicero. 'Without this,' says Quintilian, 'public speaking becomes mere empty garrulousness.' And they acted upon what they taught. Some of the preserved orations of Cicero were never delivered at all; and of Sergius Galba it is related that in preparing a speech he would employ two or three amanuenses at once. Now, the practical effect of much writing for an extemporaneous preacher is, by some of our clergy, altogether denied. Their power of intellectual abstraction, they say, enables them to compose altogether mentally. They can revolve all the bearings of a text as they recline back in their armchair, and turn out a finished homily in the course of a morning's walk. Arrangement of materials is not so much to be regarded, they consider, as the necessity of having the mind full of its subject—of having ample stores of mentally-registered thoughts upon the matter in hand, which we are to trust to the inspirations of the moment to bring in at the right place. That argument which occurs to us at the present, or that apt illustration which flashed upon us as we walked by the way, we shall be able to bid to our presence when we are in the pulpit, and give it forth with as much clearness as if it had been

written down. Now, it is of this last assertion more particularly that we stand so much in doubt. We believe there are very few who know what all the bearings of an argument will be, or how a mentally-conceived illustration will work out, till they have put down their thoughts upon paper."

There is truth in these remarks, though we think that all that is required to call up preconceived ideas in their right place is a good memory and a reasonable amount of the logical faculty. Writing can only be looked upon as a laborious method of exhibiting our thoughts.

Section 12.—*Studying and Reading Good Authors Important.*

Studying good authors and reading them aloud are valuable means of acquiring fluency and freedom in public speaking. Where the memory is good, the turns of expression and the rhythm of the style of an author will be easily caught by the reader. Some of our best poets have accustomed themselves to read diligently the best models in the metres they intend to adopt, before beginning their own compositions; for it has been found that the practice greatly assists the writer, from the kind of verse becoming familiar to the ear and fixed in the memory. By reading aloud, the *words* of an author are necessarily brought more prominently forward than when they are not uttered. In reading silently the mind is content with catching the ideas, to the neglect of the style; but in the other process the words and the form of the sentences are necessarily attended to. Lord Brougham lays great stress on

this study of good models, and he says, in his letter to the father of the late Lord Macaulay: "I earnestly entreat your son to set daily and nightly before him the Greek models. His taste will improve every time he reads and repeats to himself, and he will learn how much may be done by the skilful use of a few words."

Professor Bautain urges the student of the art of extemporaneous speaking to commit to memory the finest passages in great writers, and especially those in the most musical poets, so as to be able to recite them correctly in moments of leisure, as in a solitary walk, or when unable to attend to severer studies. We have no doubt of the value of this practice. The mind is thus furnished with fine thoughts, well expressed and well linked together; the understanding becomes familiar with graceful images, and the ear with the rhythm and harmony of speech. Bautain shews, according to what we have stated above, that the principles of imitation and assimilation are thus called into exercise. "By reading the beautiful lines of Corneille and Racine, Bossuet's majestic and pregnant sentences, the harmonious and cadenced compositions of Fénelon and Massillon, we gradually and without effort acquire a language approaching theirs, and imitate them instinctively, through the natural attraction of the beautiful, and the propensity to reproduce whatever pleases; and at last, by repeating the exercise daily for years, one attains a refined taste of the delicacies of language and the shades of style, just as a palate accustomed to the flavours of the most exquisite viands can no longer endure the coarser . . .

The best rhetorical professors recommend and adopt this exercise largely. It is irksome to the indolent, but it amply repays the toil which it occasions by the advantages which it brings. There is, besides, a way of alleviating the trouble of it by reading and learning select pages of our great authors while strolling in the garden or through some rich country, where Nature is in all her brilliancy." This is French-like, and we would remark that equal benefit would result from the practice if carried on in a walk through a ploughed field, or along a dusty road, or while sitting on a stile between two pastoral visits.

Another practice, allied to that just mentioned, is to turn into our own language the thoughts of others which we have just read. We do not know that this is not the most effective preparation for extempore preaching. The first attempts will shew the student how difficult it is to clothe in easy language, on the spur of the moment, thoughts which we thoroughly understand; and by the result of the experiment, after a sufficient number of trials, he may be able to test his power, so as to desist from the attempt to speak without notes, or to persevere in it. Archdeacon Jones, in his *Hints on Preaching*, brings forward some authorities who recommended this or a similar method. Thus, Bishop Burnett, who was an easy extemporaneous speaker, gives the following advice to a young divine: "Let him talk freely to himself on subjects suited to the pulpit, and study to give his thoughts all the heat and flight about them that he can. [What does he mean by heat and flight?] By a very few years' practice of two or three soliloquies a day, chiefly in

the morning, when the head is clearest and the spirits liveliest, a man will contract great readiness both in thinking and speaking." The celebrated American orator, Henry Clay, is said to have obtained proficiency by this plan. He began his studies of oratory comparatively late in life, but he then adopted the practice of daily reading good authors, and then speaking aloud on their contents. Sir Samuel Romilly, also, says in one of his letters: "Above all, I was anxious to acquire a great facility of elocution, which I thought indispensably necessary to my success. Instead, however, of resorting to any of those debating societies which were at that time much frequented, I adopted a very useful expedient which I found suggested in Quintilian—that of expressing myself in the very best language I could, whatever I had been reading; in using the arguments I had met with in Tacitus or Livy, and making with them speeches of my own. Occasionally, too, I attended the Houses of Parliament, and used myself to recite in thought, or to answer the speeches I had heard there."

Section 13.—*Tentative Caution necessary in first attempts—Use of Notes.*

Having determined to attempt an extemporaneous delivery in the pulpit, the preacher must proceed cautiously, trying the ground as he goes, and being most careful not to make a false step, either by a confused exhibition of the thoughts, incorrect phraseology, or a breaking down altogether in the midst of the sermon. Either of these

failures will be painful to the hearers; but their worst effect will be that they will discourage the speaker, and, perhaps, drive him from his purpose. Temporary failures ought not to lead to the abandonment of what, if obtained, is a good thing; but coming to a deadlock before a congregation is so mortifying that few men will have courage enough to begin again, and strive to overcome the difficulty. It is, therefore, very important that the learner should try every step of the way, so as to avoid stumbling. The first thing to be done to secure this object is to have the sermon fully written before you, and to accustom yourself to deliver portions of it with the eyes off the book, and where the ideas which are forthcoming are distinct in the mind, to finish sentences in words suggested at the moment. The extent to which this is done will be regulated by the ease or difficulty found in the performance. If the first part of a sentence can thus be filled in extemporaneously—then a whole sentence, then consecutive sentences, with the finger on the place from which the eyes are removed—they can immediately recur to it if it is found necessary; and a moderate amount of attention will prevent the commission of any noticeable blunder.

When the speaker finds he is expert in this partial travelling out of the record, he may begin and make excursions to a greater distance. For example, the peroration can be divided into separate portions, and one of them be left to the words supplied at the moment; or in any of the divisions of the sermon, a thought may be left without being clothed in words, to be filled up and expatiated

upon, according to the freedom which may be felt at the time. All these tentative processes will make it more and more easy to extemporise, till, at length, a whole sermon can be delivered with the aid of notes only. And sometimes, while this practice is being cultivated, a new thought may often enter the mind pertinent to the topic which is being discussed; and, if this is successfully introduced, it will afford encouragement for the future. If the requisite ability for a free delivery is really possessed, by these means it will be developed, the preacher will continually gain fresh confidence, and at length he will be able to go through a whole discourse without any external aid whatever. But we would advise that at no time should notes containing the leading divisions be laid aside. The most expert speaker may now and then be at a loss, and a note or two will prove like a beacon to the mariner who has lost his path on the wide sea. As the habit of careful preparation should never be laid aside, it is a good plan to let that take the form of notes for the pulpit, carefully arranged in a distinct hand for present safety, and for future use when it is desirable to preach the sermon again.

We would not recommend a preacher to acquire the habit of a mixed kind of address in the same sermon; in other words, not to do always what we have recommended as a mere preliminary exercise in speaking. On this subject we may quote Mr. Gresley in his *Ecclesiastes Anglicanus*. He says: "If any one finds this mode most suitable to his powers he is right to adopt it. But I never met with one who seemed to me to preach so impres-



sively in this way, as others whose sermons are either entirely written or entirely extemporary. Yet I have often observed an occasional off-hand remark expressed very happily. Thus, Bishop Hale says :—‘ In my poor and plain fashion I penned every word in the same order I hoped to deliver it ; although in the expression I listed not to be the slave of syllables.’ I think this better than the premeditated extemporising of a part of the sermon. When a part is written and a part extemporaneous, the inherent faults of the two styles appear more plainly by the contrast ; the former appears formal, the latter vague and loose.” Bautain is still more decided against notes, when used to eke out extemporary speaking. He says :—“ Notes may, doubtless, have their utility, especially in business speaking, as at the bar, at the council board, or in a deliberative assembly. Sometimes they are even necessary to remember facts or to state figures. They are the material part, the baggage of the orator ; and he should lighten it, and disencumber himself of his burden, to the utmost of his power. In truth, on the very occasions when notes should seem to be the most needed, they are totally worthless. In the most fervid moments of extemporaneous speaking, when light teems and the sacred fire burns, when the mind is hurried along upon the tide of thoughts, and the tongue, obedient to its impulse, accommodates itself in a wonderful manner to its operations, you can no longer even read your notes on the paper. You see the lines without understanding them, and they become an embarrassment instead of a help. *Nothing so tho-*

*roughly freezes the oratorical flow as to consult those wretched notes.* Nothing is so inimical to the prestige of eloquence; it brings down to the common earth both the speaker and his audience. Try, then, when you have to speak, to carry all things in yourself, and after having, to the best of your ability, conscientiously prepared, allow yourself, filled with your subject, to be borne along by the current of your ideas and the tide of words, and above all, by the Spirit from on high, who enlightens and inspires. He who cannot speak unless with notes, knows not how to speak, or what speaking is."

However, the remarks of Archdeacon Jones as to these objections, will point out more clearly the nature of the method we recommend: "Though these objections seem undoubtedly to hold against *persevering* in such a system, they lose much of their force in reference to the preacher who wishes thereby to excel. Thus Bishop Burnet recommends his young clergyman to test the strength of his opinions in short passages extemporaneously. 'He must try himself at smaller excursions from his fixed thoughts, especially in the applicatory parts, where flame and life are more necessary, and where a mistaken word, or an unfinished period is less observed and sooner forgiven, than in the explanatory part, where men ought to speak more severely. And as one succeeds in such short excursions, he may give himself a further scope, and so, by a long practice, he will at last arrive at so great an easiness both in thinking and speaking, that a very little meditation will serve to lay open a text to him, and all the matter that belongs to it.'"

Section 14.—*Saving of Time an Inferior Motive.*

A man may wish to be able to preach extemporaneously for the purpose of saving time; but this can only be a very inferior consideration with one who desires to excel. If our aim is to make preaching a work of art, to be cultivated as the means of moving and guiding our hearers, it must be viewed as the chief work of our lives, to be studied and exercised through the whole week and the whole year. It may be laid down as a rule, from which but few exceptions can be allowed, that a successful speaker must be an industrious writer; for to neglect that orderly arrangement of the thoughts which is secured by the use of the pen, is almost sure to lead to a loose and slovenly style. But then the question is, whether this exercise in composition should be used upon sermons or on other literary productions? In reply to this we have no hesitation in saying that the influence of composition is better given to sermons indirectly than immediately; in other words, that a student of the art of extemporaneous preaching should perform his experiments on other subjects than his pulpit discourses. A man who can write well on general subjects cannot fail to feel the benefit of the practice when he gets up to preach, although he may not have written more of his sermon than a bare outline; while there will be far more freedom and comfort in the delivery of what has not, as it were, been worked on the anvil. The advantages of this plan are well stated by an American writer, Dr. Henry Ware, and as they are not likely to be other-

wise seen by our readers, we will quote the passage in preference to giving further remarks of our own :—

“The great danger of not writing sermons at all would be that of substituting an easy flow of words for good sense and sober reflection, and becoming satisfied with very superficial thoughts. But this danger is guarded against by the habit of study, and of writing for other purposes. If a man should neglect all mental exertion, except so far as would be required by the meditation of a sermon, it would be ruinous. We witness its disastrous effects in the empty wordiness of many extemporaneous preachers. It is wrong, however, to argue against the practice itself, from their example, for all other modes would be equally condemned, if judged by the ill-success of indolent and unfaithful men. The minister must keep himself occupied,—reading, thinking, and investigating,—thus having his mind always active and awake. This is a far better preparation than the bare writing of sermons, for it exercises the powers more, and keeps them bright. The great master of Roman eloquence thought it essential to the true orator that he should be familiar with all sciences, and have his mind filled with every variety of knowledge. He, therefore, much as he studied his favourite art, yet occupied more time in literature, philosophy and politics, than in the composition of his speeches. His preparation was less particular than general. So it has been with the most eminent speakers. When Sir Samuel Romilly was in full practice on the High Court of Chancery, and at the same time overwhelmed with the pressure of public political concerns, his custom

was to enter the Court, and to receive there the history of the cause he was to plead, thus to acquaint himself with the circumstances for the first time, and forthwith proceed to argue it. His general preparation and long practice enabled him to do this, without failing in justice to his cause. I do not know that in this he was singular. The same sort of preparation would ensure success in the pulpit. He who is always thinking, may expend upon each individual effort less time, because he can think at once fast and well. But he who never thinks, except when attempting to manufacture a sermon (and it is to be feared there are such men), must devote a great deal of time to this labour exclusively; and after all he will not have that wide range of thought or copiousness of illustration which his office demands and which study alone can give."

Section 15.—*Occasional Speaking to be Cultivated.*

Allusion has been before made to the importance of occasional public speaking, out of the pulpit, as an exercise and preparation for the higher department. We recur to the subject again, because its importance can scarcely be estimated too highly by all those who wish to acquire the art of extempore speaking with ease to themselves and comfort to their auditors. Clerical life does not, indeed, present many extra-official opportunities for public speaking, unless the sphere of duty lies in a large town, where they are more frequent. But such opportunities can be *made*, when they do not naturally

occur. Take, for instance, the village school. The pastor visits this, perhaps, two or three times a week, and goes from class to class, making such observations as circumstances require; and this personal intercourse with the pupils is too important to be ever set aside. But an equally effective mode of influencing a school is by address to the whole, delivered from the desk or some raised place. There are very many topics which may be profitably introduced to a whole school, both during the week and on Sundays, and a clergyman who is anxious to improve himself in speaking should not be backward in bringing them on. The practice is not only unexceptionable but it may be made fruitful of good. The children may be edified, the people will be pleased with the ready zeal of their minister, and the speaker will make advances in a most important branch of his professional duties. Proper behaviour at church, the duty of singing and responding, obedience to teachers, observations on the Collects, questions on the Catechism, and the various school lessons—these are only a few of the subjects on which little speeches can be made, every one of which, if properly managed, will increase the confidence and skill of the speaker.

But something higher than this is in the power of every clergyman. He can deliver lectures, now and then, on subjects adapted to the capacities of his audience. As a lecture merely, and delivered extempore without illustrations, would require some advancement in the art of speaking, the use of a magic lantern will be found a great help, or those pictorial diagrams which are now to be had on a

great variety of popular subjects. With these aids, all that the speaker need do, even if not very confident in his powers, is to make himself master of the subject, and then deliver his ideas in any words which may occur at the moment. A few blunders, and a little breaking down, will not be noticed, and a reference to the illustrations will easily cover any defect of which the speaker may be conscious. Mixed with these more easy performances, a lecture should be now and then attempted without such illustrations. It may be on some poet or popular prose writer, or on the life of a great man, or on the history of some art or science, as printing or astronomy. All these subjects will admit of the introduction of extracts from printed volumes, which may be fewer or more extended according as the speaker may feel more or less at liberty.

In social life many opportunities are given to a clergyman of speaking a little before others. At meetings for parish business; at committee meetings for various purposes; at public dinners; at more private entertainments, such as wedding feasts, christening parties, etc., etc., there is room for something to be said; and a little speech appropriate to the occasion is always well received. A clergyman who is really anxious to possess a free delivery must be resolute on all such occasions. He must overcome the *mauvaise honte* which characterises Englishmen, and make an effort to discharge his duty in the best manner. He must rise from his seat courageously, and plunge at once *in medias res*. He will fail now and then, but practice will make perfect in this as in all other arts. By all

these opportunities the speaker will wear off the disinclination to be prominent, and the awkward shyness which would prompt him to be silent, or to hurry over a few words from his chair. There is one consideration which should make him bold and earnest in following out this advice, namely, that by doing so he will please others while he is benefiting himself. He will, also, confer some little honour on his profession, for people will run away with the idea that a clergyman ought to be able to speak. The usefulness of some excellent men is often marred by their utter inability to put a few words together *pro re nata*; and, whatever their other abilities may be, people are sure to reflect upon this as a serious defect.

We have not said anything about the opportunities afforded for exercise in speaking by public meetings for religious societies. These demand the very highest kind of extempore address for their successful performance, and any one who can excel here, will need no further instructions in the art.

Section 16.—*Authorities on Extemporaneous Preaching.*

A great many useful remarks on extempore delivery of sermons are found scattered in the works of divines and others who have written on the general subject. We shall collect a few of these, as affording important hints to the clergy, even if they adopt the plan of reading their sermons. Professor Alexander Vinet, in his *Homi-*



*letics ; or the Theory of Preaching*,\* does not specially treat of extempore addresses, perhaps, because he took it for granted it would generally be practised, as is the case in France and Switzerland. There are, however, many allusions to the advantages of a free delivery, and we give the following, which occurs in a reference to the preaching of the present century : "From the manifold demands made upon the preacher, in season and out of season, arose the practice of *improvising*, a thing all but unknown among us. This had, besides, come to be felt as needful by those of our ministers who wished that around them, as well as in them, religion should assume all the properties of a reality, and who would not allow themselves to see a living word in a recited word. Even discourses that are composed and committed to memory sometimes become, by the haste with which the labour is gone through, a second kind of improvising. What is called *meditation*—that is to say, the mode of preaching which is the least premeditated—became very prevalent. The use, perhaps, inclined to the abuse of it. It appeared to be forgotten that improvising, in its full sense, is warranted only by necessity ; that in ordinary cases, the not committing to writing does not exclude—but, on the contrary, demands—a severe preparation, and that nothing, in a word, ought to be more premeditated than improvising. At this day, perhaps, content with having, by practice, secured to ourselves an aptitude which was wanted to us, we shall

A translation from the French of this work, by Dr. A. R. Fausett, was published in 1858, by Messrs. Clark, of Edinburgh.

think ourselves obliged, by the importance of pulpit subjects, either to cultivate this aptitude with extreme care, or to reserve the use of it for the circumstances which peremptorily require it; granting the right of habitually practising it to those special and consummate talents which do not establish a precedent, because the very display of their power forces upon us the salutary knowledge of our own weakness."

There is a good note affixed to the above by the translator. He says: "Unpremeditated speech was promised to the Apostles, in emergencies, as a gift of special inspiration. But no uninspired men can presume on the same promise, without premeditation, on ordinary occasions." 1 Timothy iv. 13—15, shews that, even in the Apostles' days, premeditation and study were needed *ordinarily*.

When the preacher has command of thought and language, *and has previously well studied the subject*, unwritten sermons are more effective than written. But Gibbons, in his *Christian Minister*, well says :

"Rather read every sentence, word by word,  
Than wander in a desultory strain—  
A chaos, dark, irregular and wild—  
Where the same thought and language oft revolve  
And re-revolve, to tire sagacious minds;  
However loud the momentary praise  
Of ignorance and empty fervours charmed;  
But never to your notes be so enslaved  
As to repress some instantaneous thought,  
That may, like lightning, dart upon the soul,  
And blaze in strength and majesty divine!"

Baxter, in answer to the Quaker's objection,

“You read your sermons out of the papers, therefore you have not the Spirit,” replies, “It is not want of your abilities that makes ministers use notes, but it is a regard to the work, and the good of the hearers. I use notes as much as any man *when I take pains*, and as little as any man when I am lazy and busy, and have not time to prepare. It is easier for us to preach three sermons without notes, than one with them.”

The Senate and the Bar have often been referred to as furnishing an example for preachers in reference to extemporaneous delivery; but it can easily be shewn that the cases are not parallel. Thus, Dr. Ware says on the subject: “I have no doubt that to speak extempore is easier at the bar and in the legislature than in the pulpit. Our associations with this place are of so sacred a character that our faculties do not readily play there with their accustomed feeling. There is an awe upon our feelings which constrains us; a sense, too, of the importance and responsibility of the station, and of the momentous consequences depending on the influences he may there exert, has a tendency to oppress and embarrass the conscientious man who feels it has he ought. There is also, in the other cases, an immediate end to be attained, which produces a powerful immediate excitement—an excitement increased by the presence of those who are speaking on the opposite side of the question, and in assailing or answering whom the embarrassment of the place is lost in the interest of the argument, whereas in the pulpit there is no one to assault, and none to refute; the preacher has the field entirely

to himself, and this is sufficiently dismaying. The ardour and self-oblivion which present debate occasions do not exist; and the solemn stillness and fixed gaze of a waiting multitude serve rather to appal and abash the solitary speaker, than to bring the subject forcibly to his mind, or cause his attention to be absorbed in it. Thus, every external circumstance is unpropitious, and it is not strange that relief has been sought in the use of manuscripts."

One more opinion must suffice—that of Bishop Wilkins, in his *Ecclesiastes*: "As for composing, it will not be convenient for a constant preacher to pen *all* his discourses, or to tie himself to phrases. When the matter is well digested expressions will easily follow; whereas, to be confined to words—besides the oppression to the memory—will much prejudice the operations of the understanding and affections. The judgment will be much weakened, and the affections dulled, when the memory is overburdened. A man cannot ordinarily be so much affected himself, and consequently he cannot affect others, when he speaks by rote. He should take some liberty to prosecute a matter according to his more immediate apprehensions of it; by which many particulars may be suggested not before thought of, according to the working of his own affections, and the various alterations that may appear in the auditory. And, besides, they will breed a *παρησια*—such a fitting confidence as should be in the orator, who is to have a power over the affections of others, which such a one is scarce capable of."

Section 17.—*Practice of the Puritan Divines.*

The Puritan divines, we all know, attached the greatest possible importance to preaching ; but it is plain, from their published sermons, that they must either have read them or been greatly assisted by copious notes. Take, for example, Thomas Adams' three sermons with the strange title, *The Black Devil, or the Apostate* ; together with *The Wolf worrying the Lamb*, and *The Spiritual Navigator bound for the Holy Land*, and notice the endless divisions and subdivisions, the classical and patristic quotations, and the witty conceits and grotesque expressions of the author, and the conclusion is inevitable both that the sermons were carefully written and either preached memoriter or read altogether. Perkins, a celebrated Puritan, has written on preaching, and his works contain many excellent counsels. Thus, he gives us *The Order and Summe of the sacred and only Method of Preaching* : "1. To read the text distinctly out of the canonical Scriptures ; 2. To give the sense and understanding of it, being read by the Scripture itself ; 3. To collect a few and profitable points of doctrine out of the natural sense ; 4. To apply, if he have the gift, the doctrines rightly collected to the life and manners of men in a simple and plain speech." From another passage in Perkins' *Art of Prophesying* it would appear that it was the custom, in his day, for preachers to commit their sermons to memory ; or, as he says, "memoriter, by heart ;" and he dissuades from the plan for these reasons : "1. It renders preaching a great labour ; 2. If the preacher forget one word, it

perplexes himself and confuses the auditory ; 3. Pronunciation, action, and the holy motions and affections are hindered, because the mind is wholly taken up with recollection and repetition." It is well known that the practice of reading sermons was forbidden to the University of Cambridge by a statute of Charles II., on the ground that "the lazy custom began in the time of the civil wars." Indeed, the heavy and intricate sermons of the Puritans could not have been delivered extempore.

Section 18.—*The Rev. J. M. Neale on Extemporary Preaching.*

In the very valuable volume on *Mediæval Preachers and Preaching*, published in 1856 by the Rev. J. M. Neale, Warden of Sackville College, are many admirable hints on the importance of freedom and life in the pulpit. He says: "It seems next to certain that most of the *Sermones Varii* of Venerable Bede were extempore. No doubt some one of his disciples jotted down a brief extract of what the preacher had said, very probably for his own use on some other occasion ; and it is a collection of such abstracts that has since formed a part of the author's works. It is curious how long an impression prevailed that extempore preaching was an invention of the Puritans. Some may remember the amusing vehemence of indignation with which a writer of whom the Church of England may certainly say, '*Non tali auxilio*,' pursues this idea in her *Vicar of Wrexhill*. The truth is that the innovation, which appears to date somewhere from the time of Queen Elizabeth, was the carrying

a written sermon into the pulpit. The mediæval practice was, no doubt, the same as that of the Continental Churches of the present day, that the preacher should repeat from memory that which he had previously composed. So, also, it is affirmed of Saint Augustine that some of his sermons, as we now have them, were manifestly extemporaneous. Look at those on the *Two Castings of the Net*, among the Paschal Homilies. One glance at these will convince the reader that they were taken down at the time by some diligent hearer, and afterwards either came into the possession of the bishop or were published by the affectionate zeal of some of his disciples. The conclusions of all differ no further than would naturally result from the involuntary variation of an extemporary preacher, intending, in different years, to say the same thing."

Mr. Neale speaks of the great advantage of extempore preaching, in enabling the preacher to seize hold of passing events, and to turn to account the incidents which may occur even during the delivery of the discourse. In reference to this he says: "An anecdote lately told in the life of a Dissenting minister has a fair claim to the admiration of every priest who is in earnest. There was a minister named ———, who, it appears, had obtained no small reputation among his brethren for his eloquence generally, and more particularly for the logical sequence and the 'impressive conclusions' of his sermons. On some great occasion he was appointed to preach in the open air, and he had deeply interested his auditors through a long discourse. Just before the conclusion he was ob-

served to hesitate, and then, in a rambling manner, he recapitulated part of what had already been said, until he reached a very lame and impotent finale. At the subsequent dinner, when the preacher's health was proposed, 'Brother,' said one of the ministers present, 'we must all, I am sure, have been charmed by your discourse; but if I may hazard the observation, I thought that at the conclusion you lost the thread of your argument, and hardly equalled your ordinary eloquence.' 'If I must tell you the reason,' was the reply, 'thus it was. Just as I was about to conclude, I saw a poor man running up to the place, hot and dusty, and eager to hear. 'Speak a word to him,' said Conscience. 'You will spoil your sermon if you do,' said Pride.' And *I did* spoil it, I know; but I may have done him good.' "

Section 19.—*American Opinions on Extempore Preaching.*

The Americans study extempore preaching, and written sermons would there exert but little influence among them; and that country has produced many treatises on preaching, a few of which may be mentioned. The most important, perhaps, is Dr. Porter's *Lectures on Homiletics and Preaching, and on Public Prayer*; Professor Park has published two essays on *The Mode of Exhibiting Theological Truth*, and *The Connection between Theological Study and Pulpit Eloquence*. Professor Cotton writes on *Boldness in the Preacher*; and Professor Shepard on *The Effective Preacher*



and *Discriminating Preaching*. *Expository Preaching* is treated by Professor Stone, and Professor H. Ware gives us *Hints on Extemporaneous Preaching*. These are only a few of the treatises which might be mentioned as published in America, and the number of them indicates how much importance is attached to pulpit performances. We may observe, by the way, that Churches which are called "Voluntary," or where the pecuniary receipts depend on pew rents, a higher estimate of pulpit power, as popularly understood, always prevails. Still more is this the case where the people have the minister in their own hands and can dismiss him *ad libitum*. Of course, in that case, he is expected to do his very best in entertaining his constituents, as a condition of his retaining his office.

But to return to American treatises on preaching we have one before us published in the *Christian Review* for January 1862. It is entitled, *Pulpit Power*, and is from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Fish, of Newark, New Jersey.

In this essay will be found a great deal which is of practical value. The introduction is characteristic: "When God called Aaron to the office of high-priest, He said, as a reason, 'I know that he can speak well.' Speech is a mighty power; it is God's chief instrument in salvation." The same doctrine is maintained also in some quarters in England, that this being an age of progress, the pulpit must have increased power or lose its supremacy; that this power was never so wanting as now. 'It is an active, busy, noisy age; and if the

pulpit would be heard, it must lift up its voice like a trumpet. It is a pretentious age; and if errorists will obtrude their false views and theories, then must the pulpit meet and explode them. It is a wicked age; and if the current of vice is to be arrested, then must the pulpit be foremost with the soul-penetrating dispensations of the Word." The writer then gives lessons on the subject of preaching, and it is observable that they are all built on the supposition that the sermon is delivered extempore. The construction and composition of sermons is made of prime importance indeed. "The preacher," it is said, "sought out and set in order acceptable words." Thoughts, however good, and words, however plain, may be thrown together in such a desultory and irregular manner as to make no impression :

"Checked reason halts, her next step wants support ;  
Striving to climb, she tumbles from her scheme."

The thoughts of a discourse, therefore, must be set in "order." Yet on *delivery* the main stress is laid; and we question whether the writer of this essay supposed for a moment that his readers would think a sermon should or could be *read* when delivered. "God's wisdom is seen in giving prominence to preaching—to the *oral* communication of His Word. And He did not ordain preaching to do what the printing-press could do as well. He designed that *men* should utter the truth with the advantages of intonation, gesture, look." A passage follows, which we must quote in full: "They reflect upon God's wisdom who undervalue a good manner. It is easy to sneer at oratory, and inveigh against the

study and practice of the art of elocution. But why not denounce art in *singing*, as well as in *speaking*. If all must be left to nature in one case, why not in the other? Nature does not despise art. It is the office of art to lead back to nature. The rules of oratory are all drawn from nature if they are right rules, and he who practises upon them is only conforming to nature. It is time the vulgar prejudice against ministers learning how to be public speakers were done away with. In a very important sense *manner is matter*; and instead of less attention being given to this in ministerial training, there ought to be very much more. Neglecting this is like teaching cadets in a military school how to make powder and swords, but not teaching them how to *use* them. Many a minister fails, not from want of ammunition (for he has plenty of that), but because he cannot 'discharge' with effect the well-loaded weapon. His sword (to change the figure) is of the true metal, skilfully forged, and tempered and polished, but he does not know how to stand up and wield it. Let two ministers preach precisely the same sermon. In one case the hearers are cold, unmoved, inattentive. In the other, they are attracted, convinced, melted. The difference was in the delivery. Who will then deny that, in some sense, *manner is matter*?"

The writer goes on to describe minutely the power of the *voice* when skilfully managed, and quotes an anecdote of Bridaine, a French missionary, who preached a sermon, at the end of which he lifted up his arms, and cried three times, in a loud voice, "O, eternity!" and at the third repetition of

this awful cry, it is said, the whole audience fell on their knees, and during three days consternation pervaded the town. He says there is power, too, in a *smile* or a *frown*; in "the sweet silent rhetoric of persuading *eyes*, and in the glow of the *features* or their solemn sadness." There is also power in *gesture*, and in an animated manner. "One's whole appearance in preaching may be either inspiring to an audience, or absolutely soporific; and nothing can be more indecent than to hear a dead preacher speaking to dead sinners the living truth of a living God." But this is enough for our purpose, which is to shew that in a great country like America it is presumed that preaching, to be effective, must be extemporaneous.

Section 20.—*M. Bautain on Extemporaneous Preaching.*

M. Bautain, when Vicar-General and Professor at the Sorbonne, published a work, which has been translated into English, with the title, *The Art of Extempore Speaking: Hints for the Pulpit, the Senate, and the Bar*.\* It is worth reading, although a good deal of it is more adapted to the meridian of France than of England. Frenchmen are more talkative than we are; and, what is more to the point, they think less of themselves, and are not troubled with a "painful sense of individuality;" a most important matter for a public speaker. Still, his rules are of general application, and should be studied by those who wish to acquire an extemporaneous address. By extempore speaking he understands, as we have

\* London: Bosworth and Harrison.

done, an entire freedom as to the words employed—“a discourse neither written nor learnt by heart, but improvised; necessarily composed by the orator on the very moment of delivery, without any preparation, or previous combination of phrases.” His own experience, he says, has taught him that the greater freedom there is maintained as to the *wording* of a sermon, the *thoughts* of which are well prepared, the better it will be for the speaker; and in this respect most persons acquainted with the subject will agree with him. “Many a time have we made the attempt to mix verbal preparation with extempore speaking, by preparing an exordium or peroration, with the intention of speaking better, or in a more striking manner. But we have never succeeded in reciting what we had prepared, and in the manner in which we had constructed it. Our laboured compositions have always missed their object, and have made us embarrassed or obscure. Thus, it appears, we were made, and we have been bound to follow our nature. In such matters the lesson to be learnt is, to turn to account the demands of nature, which must be satisfied.”

Nothing could more clearly shew than this passage that an extempore speaker must have some natural qualities which alone can make him quite successful. M. Bautain himself declares that art may develop and perfect the talent of a speaker, but cannot produce it; “the exercises of grammar and rhetoric may teach a person how to speak correctly and elegantly, but nothing can teach him to be eloquent, or give that power which comes from the heart, and goes to the heart.” This fact, of there

being natural gifts concerned in the matter, is further illustrated by a reference to the superior power of women in the art of speaking, as regards elegance and grace "which are the most requisite qualities of the orator." "There is a fund of this which nature alone can give. Women are remarkable for it. The gracefulness with which nature has endowed them diffuses itself generally into their language; and some speak, and even write, admirably without any study, under the sole inspiration of feeling or passion." He then says, that men who wish to acquire the art of speaking must learn by study what most women do naturally. "And in this respect, those whose temperament most approaches the feminine, in greater sensibility and livelier impressionableness, will have less difficulty than others, and succeed better." But then, whatever natural endowments may be possessed, they will only assist art, not supersede it. "As the man who speaks in public has to express loftier ideas, general notions, and deeper or more extensive combinations, which imply depth, penetration of mind, and reflective power—qualities very scarce among women—he will never be able to expound these subjects with grace and feeling and ease of language, spontaneously and by nature. Here art must supply what nature refuses; by diligent labour, by exercises multiplied without end, the diction must be rendered pliable, the speech disciplined and broken in, that it may become an amenable instrument, obedient to the least touch of the will and lightest challenge of thought, so as to furnish instantly a copious style, seeming to flow spontane-

ously, the result, nevertheless, of the subtlest art. Like fountains which, with great cost and magnificence, carry the waters of our rivers into our squares, yet appear to flow forth naturally. Thus the words of the orator, by dint of toil and of art, and this even on the most abstract subjects, ought to attain an easy and limpid flow, with which he hardly troubles himself, but to which his attention is at all times directed, in order to bring to light the ideas in his fancy and the emotions of his heart."

M. Bautain alludes to a physical qualification for extempore speaking, and it is an important consideration. "It would be wrong to say that orators are men not plentifully furnished with modesty, and yet it is certain that the bashful and self-conscious temperament is not favourable to extemporaneous eloquence. To rise before an assembly, often numerous and imposing, without books or notes, carrying everything in the head, and to undertake a discourse in the midst of general silence, with all eyes fixed on you, is assuredly an arduous task, only fitted for those who have much physical and mental self-reliance." M. Bautain well exhibits this difficulty, and we will quote one passage out of many equally interesting and important. "When, indeed, it is remembered how little is required to disconcert and even paralyze an orator—his own condition, bodily and morally, which is not always favourable at a given moment; that of the hearers, so unstable and prone to vary, never known; the distractions which may assail him and divert him from his subject; the failure perhaps of

memory, so that a part of the plan, and occasionally its main division, may be lost in the instant; the inertness of the imagination, which may play him false, and bring feebly and confusedly to the mind what it represents; the escape of an unlucky expression; the not finding the proper term; a sentence badly begun, out of which he no longer knows his way; and, finally, all the influences to which he is subjected, and which converge upon him from a thousand eyes—when all these things are borne in mind, it is truly enough to make a person lose head or heart; and the only wonder is that men can be found who will face such dangers and fling themselves into the midst of them."

Section 21.—*Lord Carnarvon on Extempore Preaching.*

We are happy in being able to complete our somewhat long treatise on extempore delivery by a few quotations from the speech of Lord Carnarvon, delivered some months ago at the Winchester Diocesan Conference. The sermons and speeches on public occasions by the bishops and clergy express so large a share of what we may call the ecclesiastical mind of the Church, in comparison with that of the lay mind, that we are always pleased when important sentiments are uttered for the public benefit in this form; and more especially when, as in this case, the lay criticism concerns the clergy and their opinions and duties. It has often appeared to us that the laity are somewhat timid in remarking on clerical affairs, as though they did not



think themselves called upon to contribute their stock of knowledge to the clerical element of the Church's work ; but we believe that if this feeling exists, it is a mistaken one, for as far as our knowledge extends, we feel sure that our clerical brethren are always gratified when they have the attention and sympathy of the laity in the discharge of their important duties.

The following quotation from Lord Carnarvon will shew how fully his lordship appreciates the mental communion of clergy and laity in reference to the work of the pulpit, and how competent he is, from an enlarged observation, to give valuable advice : "The practical value of preaching as an efficient instrument of Church work, its applicability to the varying conditions of different times and countries, its history, the literary interest that belongs to it—for in our English sermons, I believe, some of the finest illustrations of eloquence, reasoning, and composition are to be found—all combine to make it worth a few minutes' consideration to-day. I will only add that I speak from a layman's point of view, and that if I seem to criticize our existing practice, it is from no want of appreciation of the conscientious, laborious, and often able work which our parochial clergy discharge in respect of this part of their spiritual duties." Then follows a striking passage descriptive of the all-pervading character of the labours of the pulpit through all ages of the history of the Church, and concluding as follows, in reference to our own country : "Preaching has never ceased to be a real power. It assumed many forms ; it allied itself with many

imaginative, fantastic, and even coarse appeals to the human mind; it mingled with politics and philosophy; it became dry and barren of all spiritual influence; it ceased even to be true to the doctrines and facts of Christianity. And again, as in the two great revivals of Wesley's day, and of that great Oxford movement—now more than a generation ago, with which the names of Dr. Pusey and Mr. Keble will, perhaps, be most closely associated—it touched the deepest springs of religion and spiritual life."

Coming to the subject of extemporary delivery of sermons, Lord Carnarvon expresses, in the main, the same opinions which we have given in a more enlarged form in the various sections of this chapter; and the following quotations will confirm the views which we have laid before our readers:

"Having said so much in favour of written sermons, and of the art of delivering them, and on the use of the printed sermons of others, I must venture a few words upon the opposite practice of extemporary preaching—a practice common abroad, and one which has found eminent representatives in England, though opinion here has been divided, and extemporary preachers have always been in the minority. Dean Swift and Sir Walter Scott are high authorities against the frigid form of a written sermon; South and Jeremy Taylor, on the other hand, are standing evidence that the careful periods of a written sermon may rise to the heights of the most burning vehemence or most impassioned poetry. But to whichever form of composition the preference is given, no one will doubt the vast influence of

an extemporaneous address—with this only qualification, that what is the best and most persuasive of its kind, if good, is quite the worst if it is indifferent.

“There is, however, I am certain, no greater fallacy than to suppose that an extemporary sermon saves the preacher labour and time. I believe that if it is such as it should be, it needs even more thought and preparation than a written discourse. Whitefield, whose oratorical gifts, popularity, and success have been rarely exceeded, was in the habit of preparing and learning by heart particular passages, and of repeating them over and over again to different audiences. Charles Simeon has left a curious account of his method of composition, and tells us that he used to write out his sermon ‘half-a-dozen times, at least,’ and that, having become master of it, he was able to deliver it with perfect ease and his usual animation. The principal object of preaching without reading is, of course, to convey to the mind of the hearers the strong sense of the preacher’s earnestness; and Whitefield and Simeon; Baxter, who ‘spoke as a dying man to dying men;’ Burnet, whose discourses in the pulpit were delivered without any note, and only interrupted by the frequent hum of approval on the part of his congregation, were all alive to this secret, but they none of them made it an excuse for idleness or want of preparation. Time is only wanting for the further discussion of this question; I can only express my opinion that a large field lies open to the cultivation and larger use of extemporary preaching in the Church of England, it being always remembered that to achieve success many of the gifts of the orator, as well as

unwearied patience and preparation in the closet, are needed."

Section 22.—*Recapitulation.*

We have now touched on most points which relate to extemporaneous delivery in the pulpit. We have endeavoured to state fairly its advantages and its inconveniences, and to lay down such rules as will enable any one who has a desire to excel in this mode of preaching to succeed in his attempt, provided he has the natural qualifications which are necessary. We may now sum up all we have advanced by a few words on the general question. Its importance will not be denied, even by those who have no intention of practising an extemporaneous method of address. It cannot be questioned that, both as regards a preacher himself and his congregation, there is great benefit to be derived from the delivery of a sermon extempore, meaning by that the exhibition of thoughts, previously prepared, in words suggested at the moment. To the speaker there is a vast saving of time, in the avoiding the mere mechanical writing out of what is intended to be read. Two sermons a week would demand several hours to write them down fully—probably six times as long as would be necessary for an orderly collection and arrangement of the thoughts. In these days, when so much is required of a clergyman in pastoral and parochial duties, this saving of time is a most important consideration. Then there is the comfort to the preacher, the free, spontaneous, and ready utterance of his thoughts.

There is a pleasure of no ordinary kind in the exercise of the gift of public speech, when the preacher feels he can be discursive if new thoughts present themselves, and can adapt his remarks to new circumstances which may occur.

As regards the hearers, it will be conceded that, as a rule, they prefer extempore sermons. The only objection to them which we have ever heard arises from preachers being unskilled in the art, or making it an occasion for neglect and laziness in the matter. It cannot be for a moment doubted that the same materials, the same thoughts and illustrations, will have more force if delivered without book, or that a dull written sermon would generally have more life if delivered extempore. It is mere folly, and an ignoring the commonest principles of our nature, to deny the advantages of oratory and elocution to the success of pulpit labours. That much folly is uttered by extempore preachers—that many sermons which are read are far better than those freely delivered; that there is danger of becoming *jejune*, loose and rambling when the manuscript sermon is not employed—all this may be conceded, and yet the conclusion remains that it is possible to preach extemporaneously and well at the same time, and that to be able to do so is an attainment which will be fully appreciated by an auditory. But more than this can be demanded in commendation of the art; it is capable of being made the instrument of moving men's feelings, attracting their attention, and thus winning their thoughts to the best of subjects and the noblest of duties. Allowing all that can be

said as to the mere administrative character of a preacher's work, there is yet a wide field within which he can expatiate *ad libitum*, and there is no reason, in the nature of things, why congregations of Christian worshippers should not be made to hope and fear, be moved to compunction, and remorse, and penitence, by the performances of the pulpit.

It seems plain, then, that extempore preaching should be cultivated; but it is equally clear that it is an art not attainable by all. Indeed, we think we have shewn that it will always be the exception, and not the rule, among a large body of men like the English clergy. It is not to be looked on as a *sine quâ non*, so that those who read their sermons are to be reproached as inefficient, or as though a read sermon could not be highly profitable to an audience. These, and some other popular errors, are not worthy the notice of thoughtful men, except for their refutation. Allowing all this, it surely is desirable that those who have the gift should cultivate and exercise it. Even if it were for the sake of preventing invidious comparisons between the clergy and Dissenting ministers, it is important that we should cultivate this art. But not only is extemporaneous address important in the pulpit, it is highly useful to a clergyman in other departments of ministerial duty. To write a good sermon is a high attainment—to preach one equally good, extemporaneously, is a still higher one.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### INDIVIDUAL TENDENCIES.

WE approach a subject of some practical importance, although one which is not often touched upon, or even thought of. Every man has his own mental peculiarities, his idiosyncrasy of character, as it is called, and this will display itself in all the course of his life, and in the discharge of all his duties. The question is, how far should it be allowed to pervade his preaching; to what extent should it be encouraged or counteracted. If we turn to Holy Scripture, we find that men especially inspired to proclaim the Gospel did retain their peculiar mental habits and tendencies when occupied in their high office. Thus, there is a marked difference between the styles of St. John, St. Peter, and St. Paul. The writings of the "disciple whom Jesus loved" are such as might be expected from one so honoured; those of St. Peter exhibit the impulsive energy, which displayed itself so often in his life; and in those of St. Paul, there is everywhere the dialectic and logical tendency by which we know his mind was distinguished. If the highest kind of inspiration permitted the continuance and the exhibition of the peculiar characteristics of its subjects, much more will this be the case with ordinary Christian men. However Divine grace may refine and elevate, it will still leave the radical features of character untouched, so that the

slow and cautious shall not become earnest and sanguine, or the impetuous become cool and calm.

As this is a law of Divine life in man, it must, of course, influence the clergy, and, if nature is followed, must appear in their sermons. And such is the case, in fact, with all great original preachers. As Latimer was in private and public life, so are his sermons; as we find Jeremy Taylor as a man in his chequered career, so are his discourses. Is it, then, best for one who wishes to excel in preaching to follow the natural bent of his mind, and cultivate one style of sermon writing; or should he endeavour to cast his peculiarities into the shade by a more general method? These questions, it will be seen, concern the cultivation of preaching as an art far more than it is generally practised. How vast is the distance between one who never wrote a sermon of his own, or who generally employs the productions of others from year to year, and the man who so far *studies* his pulpit performances as to enquire whether he is right in giving too great a prominence to the peculiarities of his own mind! Yet as there have been, and still are, men who are great as preachers, so there will be more, and from the mass of our readers we hope that many will ultimately excel in this great work.

Our own opinion is, that each gift which is bestowed on an individual man, should have special cultivation. Yet it must not be carried to such an excess as to mar the symmetry of the whole mental development. A logical mind must not be always dwelling on topics which have to be reasoned out; and on the other hand, a preacher whose forte is



earnest exhortation, must not neglect doctrinal subjects, or forget to argue when argument will do good. But in reference to the general style of preaching, we think it will be best to cultivate the gift which we have, whatever it may be, and strive to excel in it. Some time ago the *North British Review* contained some valuable remarks on individual character, illustrated by a reference to the late Mr. James, the popular preacher at Birmingham. The great central peculiarity in his preaching was the *necessity of conversion*, and to the constant dwelling on this, it is said, he owed his great success. His mental character led him to this singling out of one grand topic, and he followed the bent of his mind. The reviewer says:—"It was the mighty strength of his religious belief which constituted the central power of his preaching. With convictions less intense, and a purpose less strong, only feebly ascendant over the natural oratory which enabled him to move an audience to horror, admiration, reverence, or action, as he willed, he might have degenerated into the mere orator, blazing for a time among pulpit meteors of the first magnitude; but his object was neither to charm men's ears nor to dazzle their imaginations, but to save them from perishing. Condemnation and salvation, death, eternity and judgment to come, were to him the most vital and outstanding realities in the universe. And his single aim, to which thought, manner, and language were subordinated, was to impress them as such upon his hearers, and his success was but the fruition of his intense faith and desire. So great was the

mightiness of his conviction, so intense the yearning of his earnestness, so irresistible the force and verity of his eloquence, that no man ever departed with the conviction that the trumpet-tongued evangelist, whose incandescent utterances were piercing, melting or scarifying the souls of men, had a solitary earthly ambition, or a cause on earth to serve but that for which he was a minister, or a lower aim than to win each soul to be reconciled to God."

A sermon may be composed in two ways in reference to the feeling with which the work is begun and carried through. It may be a task performed with a sense of dislike, or at least, under compulsion; or it may be a pleasant study, undertaken as any artist in love with his profession would sit down to work out his conceptions. The former state of mind is most undesirable, for it must mar the happiness of a clergyman, and also militate against his success. That which is composed hurriedly, and without the exercise of a hearty goodwill, will scarcely be adapted to edify the hearers. An audience is always prepared to be affected by the speaker who is to address them; and in many ways—some explicable, and others recondite and almost mysterious—the inward feelings of a preacher, in regard to his work, will tell upon his congregation.

A fixed time should, therefore, be devoted to sermon-making, and that the best which can be had, as to the freshness of the powers both of body and mind. It may be customary for some parish priests to postpone their studies to all sorts of secondary and secular duties; but this is most unwise, and is

sure to tell badly in the end. Clergymen who engage helpers—whether as deacons or priests, but especially the former—should be very scrupulous in taking up too much of their time, and should, as far as they can, urge upon young men to devote the best hours of the day to study and composition. And when a man has a benefice of his own, and settles down into the common routine of parochial life, he will find it best in every way to make the composition of his sermons the *chief* occupation of certain days of the week. Visiting the flock, and all the *etceteras* of the profession, real and conventional, can be attended to *after* regular work in the study quite as well as before; but the converse of this is not true, for when the body is fatigued the mind must sympathize with it. A sermon begun after breakfast (we suppose we must not presume, in these days, to talk of a couple of hours *before*) will tax the writer very differently from one commenced in the evening, or late in the day. Walking to a distance to discharge ministerial duties, or visiting from house to house, will be a relaxation from the mental toil of the closet; but the latter cannot be entered with the hope of working well after the best part of the day has been spent in what fritters the attention, and which sometimes distracts the mind, and unfits it for close thought.

So far as regards the prudential consideration of the most efficient time for a clergyman's studies. But now let us say a little upon the pleasure and profit which the composition of a sermon may bring with it. To copy the discourse of another is a mere mechanical exercise; to alter and adapt, as well as

copy, demands a higher faculty ; but to compose *de novo* is a work of art which may call into action all the best powers of the mind, and our warmest feelings. The preacher, in collecting and arranging his materials, is about to serve God, to promote the highest interests of his fellow-men, and to benefit his own mind and heart. It is the last of these which we would now lay stress upon ; and only those who have tried it are aware how much intellectual improvement may be derived from the careful composition of a sermon. First of all, it is an exercise in divinity calling for the study of the Bible, the Fathers of the Church, and the theologians of all time, and it will thus be seen how the labours of the pulpit will tax the most extensive resources of the Church in all ages. In this way the priest will become "thoroughly furnished to all good works," as far as the study of Holy Scripture and its catholic exegesis can make him so. But this is not all. He may lay under contribution the facts of history, ancient and modern, the varying fortunes of the Church, and the striking events of our own day. He will make all these instructive materials his own, and then find a pleasure in building them up into a hortatory production which shall acquit him of negligence in his work, and enable him to edify and please those who are committed to his care.

## CHAPTER IX.

### LENGTH OF SERMONS.

THE difference in the length of pulpit discourses in different ages and individuals is remarkable, some of them extending to two hours, others being confined in the narrow boundary of ten minutes. Variations as much contrasted may be found in the preachers of the ancient Church, those of the Greek communion being generally longer than those of the West. At the time of the Reformation short sermons were in fashion, as may be seen in the homilies and the works of Latimer and others; but this custom was entirely changed at the era of the Great Rebellion, not only among the Puritans, but also with the conservative divines. We wonder now what audiences they could have been which could sit out the long and deeply-argued sermons of Jeremy Taylor and John Howe; but it must be remembered that the times were then exciting ones, and men had more of passion to sustain their attention. In our own days long sermons are a sort of tessera of the Evangelical party, while High Churchmen often go to the extreme of shortness. We believe it is the fact that the complaints of the length of Common Prayer come mostly from the former party, and that a desire to luxuriate more in preaching leads many to wish to curtail the prayers. We once heard the curious observation made of a

curate in a very large parish, that he was unfit for his work because he got through the afternoon Service, with a sermon, in an hour; and people have been known to say that it was hardly worth while dressing for church, because the preacher gave only twenty minutes to his discourse. Yet an hour is abundant for the decent and effective discharge of a clergyman's duty at Evening Service, especially in rural parishes. In our own experience we have found that time enough, with a sermon of twenty minutes, for a solemn performance of the Service, with the Canticles chanted, and a Psalm sung before sermon.

In the present state of the Church of England it may be safely stated that half-an-hour should be the greatest length of a sermon, except on extraordinary occasions, and by men of reputation and of popular abilities. The case would be different if we were allowed to make a separate service of preaching, as is done at the Universities; but the previous reading of the Common Prayer, to which we are wisely confined, with the accustomed portion of time given to singing, indisposes the hearer to long sermons, and no prudent parish priest will venture to exceed the half-hour. And there is no reason in the world why he should wish to do so, as thirty minutes is long enough for the orderly and efficient discussion of any topic which ought to be brought into the pulpit. Let some of the best printed sermons be consulted, and it will be found that a logical arrangement, a full discussion of each division, and an eloquent peroration can all be got into less time than half-an-hour. So far from its denoting poverty of ideas and want of skill to preach short

sermons, the contrary is the fact. It is easier to be diffuse than to compress one's ideas, and it will generally be found that the long sermons of popular preachers contain a great deal which would be better away, and that they would be liked still better if they were shorter. There is only one exception to this remark, and that is the case when the people entertain the fanatical idea that the preacher speaks by the direct help of the Holy Spirit. Some popular preachers keep up this ignorant error in the minds of their audience by their prayers before sermon, and by other oratorical tricks of art; but such a course is utterly unworthy of any public teacher, especially of the clergy of the Church of England.

In the case of written discourses, it is easy to keep to a fixed time; but those who preach extempore, and allow the fervour of a passing moment to originate new thoughts as they proceed, will sometimes be carried beyond the period allotted to them. But this tendency to exuberance will be corrected by experience. There is no doubt that some of the most effective passages in extempore sermons are those which are produced at the moment, but still "the spirits of the prophets should be subject to the prophets;" and it is mere affectation frequently for a preacher to say that he has been carried ten minutes or a quarter of an hour beyond the prescribed limits without his own knowledge of the fact. But there is in extempore speaking an inconvenience opposite to this, for the preacher will often find it difficult to get to the limit he has assigned to himself. If he is sometimes warmed and animated by his subject, so that his mind generates more ideas

than are wanted, he is also liable to be influenced by circumstances which disable him from saying as much as he would. Personal indisposition, unusual warmth or coldness of the church, and the listlessness of the congregation, will sometimes check the orator and deprive him of his usual facility of production. In that case let him stop short in preference to trying to speak against time. An excellent piece of advice is given by the late Dr. Adam Clarke in a letter to a lay preacher. He presumes, as a Methodist, that he will speak extempore, and warns him that sometimes he will find his matter less accessible than others; "but," he says, "by no means attempt to talk to the people when you feel you have said all you intended; for it is better to stop short at a quarter of an hour than to utter mere repetitions and truisms in order to get on five-and-twenty minutes."

We have observed in some preachers the habit of frequently looking at a watch, and we hope to be excused in saying that this has often appeared to us to be mere affectation. Yet we must concede that in other cases there has been a real inability to recognize the time which the sermon has occupied, so that reference to a timepiece is necessary. The circumstance that our churches, as a rule, have no clocks within them, while a Dissenting chapel is never without one in a prominent position, tells its own tale. A long experience in preaching enables us to say that whatever might be the case in early life, we have for many years instinctively drawn our sermons to a close at the customary period.



## CHAPTER X.

### TONE AND MODE OF UTTERANCE.

THE importance of this subject cannot be denied, although it has often been exaggerated. Excellence of matter and earnestness of feeling will make a preacher interesting and attractive, in spite of faults of address; but this is no reason why a pleasing utterance should not be made an object to be desired and studied. Nature does much in this matter, and some voices never can be made pleasing in themselves, but they may be so trained as to make their defects little observed. The criticisms of a judicious friend should be sought after by the young preacher, and a greater boon could not be conferred on those just ordained to the deacon's office than for any fault to be pointed out to them. From the want of this, defects, which are at first accidental, become habits, and are afterwards remedied with great difficulty. But, as a rule, they are never removed altogether. As a man begins, so he goes on, unconscious of blemishes of utterance which may create a prejudice when he is first heard, only to be overcome by an acquaintance with his higher qualities.

The preacher should endeavour to speak *naturally* in the same key in which his ordinary conversation is carried on, only louder according to circumstances. The most intimate friend would be unable

sometimes to recognize a preacher by his voice, if he did not see him, and when this is the case it is clear that the tone is artificial, and so far wrong. If a company of men are engaged in some game in a field, and one wishes to call another at a distance, it will be observed that the natural tone is almost always maintained, only elevated according to the distance it has to go. The reason of this is that in such circumstances men feel at ease, and therefore speak naturally. But when the pulpit is entered, there is often an excitement and a degree of timidity, and a good deal of what is known as subjectivity. We are too apt to think of ourselves, and this at once puts us into an artificial position. This should be counteracted by remembering that, after all, a church is but a large room, and by addressing those present as we should if they were at home, only with due deliberation and solemnity. A good rule is to fix the eye on the most remote person in the congregation, and to address him. As we are accustomed to reckon distances before we begin to speak everywhere else, the rule should be observed in church. We do so without knowing it elsewhere, and it will be equally easy from the pulpit, if we only act *naturally*, and maintain a calmness and self-possession. On a proper beginning of a public address will depend its successful performance all through. On this point it is well said by Bautain: "Should the speaker force his voice at the beginning it will be presently rendered hoarse, broken, exhausted, and it will speedily fail him. You must speak neither too loudly nor too fast at first, or else the rapid expansions and contractions

of the lungs force it and falsify it. You must husband your voice at starting, in order that it may last and maintain itself to the end. When you gradually strengthen and animate it it does not give way, but remains clear, strong, and pleasing to the close of your harangue."

As to the *modulation* of the voice, we believe that unless a speaker has a peculiar ear for it, he never will attain any perfection in it. A man who has no perception of the relations of musical sounds can never *study* modulation in delivery. But nature does much in this way, and if followed, a sufficient variation of tone will be maintained. Emphasis, and the higher and lower tones, as the result of feeling, and the raising of the voice when questions are asked, are as natural to all men as speaking is, and why should not these be followed in the desk and the pulpit? Like all things else, this rule may be abused, and some preachers become ridiculous by carrying to excess this natural mode of addressing others. We have heard the words, "Zacchæus, come down!" so uttered in the reading-desk as to excite merriment, the speaker affecting the tones he would employ if calling a boy out of an apple-tree. Yet it would be wrong not to give some of the emphasis to the words which we may be sure nature would employ. Especially should the voice indicate those deeper feelings which the topics of pulpit address are so eminently adapted to call forth. When we blame ill-doers in the street, when we speak comfort to the dying man, when we reason with those who are blind to the consequences of evil actions, we naturally employ various tones of voice, and modu-

late our utterances without knowing it. In the same way we *ought* to speak in the pulpit. When we reason of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; when we exhibit the love of Christ to our fallen race; when we comfort the feeble-minded, or raise and support the penitent and the doubting—surely in these cases we cannot fail to vary our tones. We shall do so if we forget ourselves and act naturally. To *feel* properly is therefore the surest way to speak effectively, and in the absence of a training in elocution as an art, this is the general rule which must be followed. Of elocution and oratory we do not propose now to treat. Little that is effective on these subjects can be taught, except by *vivá voce* instruction. We have generally found that those who have employed professional tutors in these arts have made but little progress in improving their pulpit addresses, while in many instances an unnatural and affected style has been produced. We think it best for us to leave this point altogether

## CHAPTER XI.

### ST. AUGUSTINE ON PREACHING.

WE have already quoted from the treatise of this great Father, but its importance and value make it necessary that we should enlarge upon it. The Hulsean essay for 1859 is entitled, *Christian Oratory: an Inquiry into its History during the first Five Centuries*. It is written by Mr. Horace M. Moule, of Queen's College, Cambridge, and it is a very interesting and suggestive work. One chapter is devoted to St. Augustine, as an illustration of what Mr. Moule calls the "Oratorical Period proper;" and he gives a very useful analysis of the treatise on the art of preaching by that renowned Father. It is contained in the larger work called *De Doctrinâ Christianâ*. It is often quoted in works on Homiletics, and it is deserving the attentive perusal of all preachers. It has been generally described as marked by correct taste and good sense. It is remarkable as being the only work expressly treating of the art of preaching from the days of St. Paul to the Reformation. St. Chrysostom, Gregory the Great, and some more modern writers, had indeed touched on the subject; but Augustine's treatise stood alone, and was the work from which Luther derived his counsels respecting preaching. An English translation of it appeared in the *American Biblical Repository* some years ago, made by

the Rev. O. A. Taylor. Those of our readers who wish to study it in the original will find it in the cheap edition of the treatise *De Doctrinâ Christianâ*, published by Tauchnitz of Leipsic, and to be had of any foreign bookseller. A good English translation is contained in the complete works of St. Augustine recently published in English by Messrs. Clark of Edinburgh, a noble monument of literary enterprise.

Augustine speaks of rhetoric as useful when engaged on the side of truth. It should be acquired in early life, and chiefly by the study of living models—by hearing acknowledged good speakers. He looks upon the preacher as a champion for the truth and a foe of all error; and the prime object of his profession is to teach that which is good and refute what is evil. With this object in view all kinds of address may be successfully employed, varying with the special design, which is sometimes to instruct, or to teach what is unknown or forgotten; but at others, and more frequently with Christian congregations, to stir up to a practical use of what is known already. Augustine lays more stress on correct knowledge of a subject than on the art which may be employed to exhibit it; and he thinks that the knowledge specially demanded of a preacher is of the Old and New Testaments. This knowledge of Scripture is the first requisite of a Christian orator; and when it is possessed, all that art can do should be employed to set it off. He examines the question whether the sacred writers themselves were eloquent, or whether their power arises from their intimate knowledge of their sub-

ject; and he concludes that they had a special eloquence of their own. "So far as I can understand the Scriptures, there is not only nothing more wise, but also nothing more eloquent; and I presume to say that every one who rightly understands them immediately sees that they could not properly have expressed themselves in any other way. Indeed, as there is one kind of eloquence appropriate to youth, and another to old age—and eloquence ceases to be eloquence when it loses this personal congruity—so, also, there is a kind of eloquence appropriate to those dignified with the highest authority, and manifestly divine. This eloquence the sacred writers possess; nor would another kind become them, nor this kind become others; for to them it is appropriate, but for others it might seem too humble, just in proportion as it excels in solidity rather than in empty show. Where I do not understand them, the eloquence of the Scriptures is to me, indeed, less apparent; but still, I do not doubt that they are as eloquent in this case as in the other. The very obscurity in which their divine and saving words are involved, must have been mingled with such a degree of eloquence as that our intellect may profit by it, not only in invention, but also by exercise." He illustrates what he advances by an examination of some passages of the Old and New Testaments, and says of them that they combine wisdom with eloquence.

The reference to obscure passages of Scripture leads Augustine to exhort the preacher against any imitation of them. Above all things clearness and perspicuity are to be studied. Deep and mys-

terious things may be expounded in private, but in the pulpit all should be simple and plain. The preacher should even sacrifice elegance to usefulness in his efforts to instruct his auditors. One passage here is so suggestive that we must quote it. "He who is fond of this perspicuity will sometimes neglect the more elegant words, looking not at what sounds well, but at what faithfully designates and brings out to view the ideas he purposes to convey. Hence a writer has said (Cicero), in treating of this species of discourse, that there is in it a kind of *careful negligence*. This negligence, however, detracts from the beauty of the language in such a way as not to contract anything offensive. Indeed, the anxiety of good teachers to impart instruction is, or ought to be, so great, as to lead them to employ common words where pure Latin ones would be ambiguous or obscure; and to express themselves in the ordinary language of the ignorant in preference to that of the learned, if by so doing they can become intelligible and clear . . . . He, therefore, who teaches will shun all words that do not teach; and if other words in good usage can be found which are intelligible, he will select them in preference; but if not, either because they do not exist or because they do not at present occur to his mind, he will employ those that are less pure; the thing itself, however, being meanwhile taught and learnt in its purity."

When speaking of perspicuity, St. Augustine makes a remark on a subject which is too much neglected or forgotten—the propriety of leaving a subject when it has been sufficiently discussed. For



if we are to labour to make all things plain, our toil is misapplied after that end has been reached. "As soon as it is manifest that the audience understand what is said, the speaker should either close his discourse, or pass on to other things; for as that orator proves acceptable who removes obscurity from what is to be made known, so he proves burdensome who dwells on and inculcates things that are known." It is common to speak of *sameness* in preaching, and of some it is said that they "say the same thing over and over again." This is by all means to be avoided, although, of course, originality cannot often be attained in a field so defined and limited as Christian teaching must be. But this avoidance of *sameness* need not lead us to fear offending by the frequent exhibition of the same truths. As St. Augustine says, again: "There are cases in which even known things are exhibited, in order to delight an audience; but then, it is not the things themselves which command attention, but the manner in which they are uttered. Now, in such a case, it matters not whether he who officiates is a reader or speaker, provided the matter itself be apprehended, and please the audience. Whatever is well written, is usually not only read with pleasure by those to whom it is presented for the first time, but it is also read a second time, and that not without pleasure, by those to whom it is already known, and from whose minds it has never been erased. So, likewise, it is willingly listened to by both these classes of persons.

A pleasing manner of stating Christian truth is much insisted on by St. Augustine. Cicero's dic-

tum is quoted, who says of the orator : "Necessity requires him to teach, suavity to delight, and a desire for victory to persuade." To please, indeed, intelligibility is the first requisite ; but besides making ourselves understood, we must aim at being interesting. Truth may be evolved and illustrated, and yet "if this be done in a disagreeable manner, it will only prove of benefit to a few of the most studious, who are anxious to know whatever there is to be learned, without regard to the low and irrelevant style in which it may be expressed." But others will not be so in love with the substance as not to care about the manner. "If he wishes also to *delight* the person addressed, or to *persuade* him, then his manner of speaking becomes a point to which he must attend ; in order to be induced to listen, so he must be persuaded in order to be induced to act ; and as he is delighted if you speak with suavity, so he is persuaded if he loves what you promise, fears what you threaten, and hates what you blame," etc. All that is said by the great father on this point is worthy of deep consideration, and we cannot but think our preachers may profitably bend their attention a little more to the "art of pleasing." It is natural, perhaps, for those who have a diamond to be satisfied with its intrinsic value ; yet surely he is most to be approved who spends a little in polishing it, so that its beauty may attract and please the beholders.

But, on the other hand, Augustine guards against the misuse of oratory by men striving to please in order to inculcate error, or to lead to some incorrect conduct. On this topic he is most forcible

and eloquent, and we must quote a passage of general practical value: "Much pains have been given to this suavity by many writers, and by its means many wicked and detestable things have been most elegantly inculcated by the wicked and base, not for the purpose of obtaining the assent of people to them as true, but for the sole purpose of delighting; in consequence of which they will continue frequently to be read. God avert from His Church what Jeremiah relates respecting the synagogue of the Jews, when he says: 'A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so, and what will ye do in the end thereof?' O eloquence, terrible and vehement in proportion to thy solidity and purity! Thou art indeed like 'the hammer that breaketh in pieces the rock,' as God Himself says of His Word, uttered by the sacred prophets. Away, therefore, away far from us be what was said of God's ancient people, 'that the priests commend those who speak wickedly, while the people of God love to have it so.' Far away from us, I say, be such madness, for what shall we do in the end thereof? Admit that the things which we speak are less intelligible, less pleasing, less effective, still let them be spoken; and let good and honest things be heard with willingness, and not such as are dishonest. But this depends solely on the suavity with which they are uttered."

St. Augustine has some extended observations on style, which he divides into the plain, the intermediate, and the lofty, and illustrates by passages

of Holy Scripture. Whichever of these is employed by a preacher, his great object is to *persuade*, and if he does not do this he fails in arriving at the particular object or end of elocution. And he exposes an error entertained by some then, as it is now, that plain preaching cannot be so forcible to persuade as that which is ornate and florid, or filled with tropes and high-sounding phrases. He says that the plain style is adapted to solve difficult questions, to furnish unexpected demonstrations, and to bring out to view the most acute opinions. He then incidentally informs us of a feature of public preaching in his day, which would not now be tolerated, namely, the expressed applause of the audience. He says: "The plain style, under these circumstances, often excites such acclamations as almost to lose its distinctive character, and cease to be recognised as plain. The fact, then, that this style appears neither adorned nor armed, but always as it were, naked, does not prevent it crushing an adversary by its muscular strength, nor hinder it from overturning and destroying falsehood with its powerful members. But whence come the *frequent and multiplied acclamations*, except from the delight experienced by the audience on seeing the truth thus demonstrated, defended, and rendered victorious? Even in the plain style, therefore, the sacred teacher and orator should aim so to express himself that he may be heard not only with intelligence, but also with willingness and obedience."

Reference is then made to the importance of a preacher leading a holy life, so that his teaching may be corroborated and enforced by example; yet

even on this topic Augustine exhibits his catholicity, and does not make the success of ordinances depend on the character of the minister, as so many moderns are disposed to do. "He who speaks with wisdom and eloquence, but at the same time leads a wicked life, does indeed teach many who are desirous of learning, though, as it is written, 'he is unprofitable to himself.' Eccles. xxxvii. 19. And if many are profited, even when it is known that the teacher acts inconsistently, how many more would be benefited if his walk and conversation were in harmony with his doctrine? A good name will do more good, even when he who has it may be unapt to please by his discourses, than the greatest eloquence when accompanied by a wicked life." And what has been advanced on the subjects of ability and goodness is then summed up in the following way: "As, however, he who has a beautiful body and a deformed mind is more to be pitied than if he had also a deformed body, so he who utters falsehood in an eloquent manner is more to be pitied than if he uttered it in a disagreeable manner. To speak with wisdom, therefore, as well as with eloquence, what is it but to exhibit all such truths as should be exhibited, in appropriate words, in the plain style; in elegant words in the intermediate; and in vehement words in the grand? Let him, however, who is unable to do both, speak with wisdom what he cannot speak with eloquence, rather than speak with eloquence what is destitute of wisdom. If he is unable to do even this, then let him so order his walk and conversation as not only to obtain a reward for himself, but also to prove an example to others;

and let his eloquence, so to speak, consist in his manner of life."

The last extract we shall make from this admirable treatise on the art of preaching concerns the question of borrowed sermons, which appears to have been agitated in St. Augustine's day as in our own. Indeed, it could not be otherwise in any age of the Church, when a sermon or two was every week demanded of the clergy stationed in the same parish from year to year. "There are individuals who can pronounce a discourse well, but are unable of themselves to compose one. Such persons will do well to take the discourses of others, when written with wisdom and eloquence, and, committing them to memory, rehearse them to the people, provided they have received a commission to this effect. In this way, indeed, we may obtain many preachers of the truth, which is certainly useful, without having many masters, provided they all speak the production of one true Master, and there be no schisms among them. Nor should such persons be deterred from this labour by the voice of Jeremiah the prophet, through whom God rebuked those who 'stole his words each one from his neighbour;' for to steal is to take what belongs to another; but the Word of God certainly belongs to those who obey it. He rather is to be accused of speaking what is not his own, who, while he speaks well, leads a wicked life; for though the good things he utters seem to be the productions of his own genius, they are foreign from his manners and habits. God, therefore, pronounces them to be stealers of His Word who desire to appear good in speaking what is

God's, while they are wicked in practising what is their own." All this is sensible and practical, and it appears that in the mind of Augustine there was no such idea as is common among religious people now, that a man should preach as he is taught at the time by the Spirit. Plain practical truths were all he contemplated as necessary, and the effect of them would be the same by whomsoever delivered, the style and manner being equal. What he says of sermons being the property of the whole Church is worthy of note. He concludes as follows: "A learned but wicked man may compose a discourse in which the truth is exhibited, to be delivered by another who is a good man but not eloquent. In this case the former gives to another what is not his own. When, however, pious believers assist pious believers in this way, both of them speak what is their own, since even God is theirs, whose are the things they speak; and those who live in conformity to the things they thus speak, practice what is their own, even though unable to exhibit in a discourse of their own composition."

We hope this slight sketch of the treatise of the great Father of the West will be acceptable to our readers. The whole treatise should be read, not only for its useful hints on preaching, but also because it incidentally tells us many things relating to Christian life and work in that early day.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CLAUDE ON THE COMPOSITION OF SERMONS.

AT the latter part of the last century, and during the first thirty or forty years of the present one, the standard work on preaching, as far as relates to the composition of a sermon, was Claude's essay. The author of this popular work was considered the leader of the French Protestant party in the seventeenth century, being born in the year 1619, and dying in 1687. He was minister of Charenton, near Paris, where he held the celebrated conference with Bossuet, on the occasion of the abjuration of Mademoiselle de Duras. At the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes he went into Holland. His works were numerous and popular, and one of them, in folio, is well known to English divines: *The Catholic Doctrine of the Eucharist in all Ages*, with Bertrand's book on that subject, published in London in 1684. His essay does not appear to have been much known in England, for it was not translated until the year 1779, when it was executed and published by Robert Robinson, a somewhat celebrated Baptist minister, at Cambridge, of semi-Arian sentiments, whose preaching attracted a good deal the undergraduates of that day. In his preface he tells us that he published Claude's essay "for the use of those studious ministers in our Protestant Dissenting Churches who have not enjoyed the advantages



of a regular academical education." Though a little out of the way, we must add a passage which is curious as illustrative of Dissenting Church life : "One of the many invaluable privileges which our congregations enjoy is that of choosing their own ministers. The principal object of attention among our people in choosing their ministers is the *piety* of candidates ; consequently the choice often falls on a man whose religious principles are his whole qualification. The far greater part of these ministers, however, are men of good natural abilities and sincere piety ; they have a thorough knowledge of the practical part of Scripture, just notions of civil and religious liberty, an unblemished moral deportment, an honest and good heart, and an extensive usefulness among the people of their charge." To them it was thought the essay would be useful. But the two volumes of Robinson are anything but an appeal to ignorant and illiterate men. They abound in notes of a miscellaneous kind, many of them in the learned and foreign languages, and forming altogether the most curious collection of pulpit anecdotes anywhere to be met with. The work is of course entirely in the service of Dissent, but we should be sorry to be without it, and we have often read its pages with the interest excited by a novel. It is to be met with cheap in old book shops sometimes.

We presume that the essay thus introduced to English readers must have been useful in England, but it was brought more especially under the attention of our clergy by its being published by the Rev. Charles Simeon. It passed through several

editions, and was very extensively used. Yet the treatise is perhaps, at the present day, almost without influence among us. It may be studied with advantage for many of its practical hints, but its theory of what a sermon should be is not adapted to the meridian of the Church of England. The sermons which Claude had in his eye were deep logical productions, long, and abounding in divisions and subdivisions. Discourses of this type are still popular among foreign Protestants, and they prevail very much in Scotland. But they are too intricate, too doctrinal, and too long for the Church of England, except in a few singular cases. Yet, as we have before intimated, a judicious reader may profit a good deal by the instructions of Claude. The essay contains nine chapters—on the Choice of Texts; General Rules of Sermons; of Connection; of Division; of Texts to be discussed by way of Explication; by way of Observation; of Application; of Proposition; of the Exordium; of the Conclusion. The divisions of these topics are often most minute.

According to Claude, the parts of a sermon are five; the exordium, the connection, the division, the discussion, and the application. At first sight this appears rather pedantic, yet it will be found, on examination, to be natural and logical. A subject must be introduced in some way, however brief and commonplace; its connection with the part of Holy Scripture where the text is found ought to be pointed out and noticed; a division must really be made, although it may not be formal, or technically worded. The discussion is, of course,

the substance of the sermon ; and there must be an application, although not necessarily set forth in propositions. Sometimes a sermon is a continual application ; but in whatever way, an application there must be if a sermon is intended to answer any practical object. Claude, however, really abbreviates this enumeration. He says : "As connection and division are parts which ought to be extremely short, we can only properly reckon three parts—exordium, discussion, and application."

But while all these parts of a sermon are treated fully and practically, there is, as we said before, a far too formal notion of a sermon given in this treatise ; and its value now is rather in its scattered hints and rules, which are often of great practical value. Thus, on choice of texts we find many excellent observations, which we will epitomise for the benefit of our readers. "Texts," it is said, "should have *a complete sense*," for only impertinent and foolish people will attempt to preach from one or two words, which signify nothing. William Huntingdon, the celebrated coal-heaver, who drew thousands of people to hear him, is said to have preached from "Topnot, come down !" an irreverent maltreating of St. Matthew xxiv. 17 ; and we knew a clergyman to take for his text the word "Mary !" (St. John xx. 16.) And not only must words which have a complete sense of themselves be taken as texts, but they must also include *the complete sense of the writer* whose words they are ; for it is his language and his sentiments which the preacher professes to explain. This rule is prettily illustrated as follows : "For example, should you take these

words of 2 Cor. i. 3, 'Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort,' and stop here, you would include a complete sense, but it would not be the Apostle's sense. Should you go further, and add, 'who comforteth us in all our tribulation,' it would not then be the complete sense of St. Paul, nor would his meaning be wholly taken in, unless you went on to the end of the fourth verse. When the complete sense of the sacred writer is taken, you may stop, for there are few texts in Scripture which do not afford matter sufficient for a sermon ; and it is equally inconvenient to take too much text or too little : both extremes must be avoided."

On this head Claude has some very important observations on the *object* of preaching in relation to Holy Scripture ; or, we may say, on the difference between exegetical and practical preaching. Our Scotch neighbours delight in expositions of the Bible delivered from the pulpit, and they are, no doubt, of great value occasionally. But the following remarks place the subject in a very proper light: "When too much text is taken, either many important considerations which belong to the passage must be left out, or a tedious prolixity must follow. A proper measure, therefore, must be chosen, and neither too little nor too much matter taken. Some say that preaching is designed only to make Scripture understood ; and, therefore, they take a great deal of text, and are content with giving the sense and with making some principal reflections ; but this is a mistake, for preaching is not only intended to give the sense of Scripture, but also of theology

in general, and, in short, to explain the whole of religion, which cannot be done if too much matter be taken ; so that I think the manner commonly used in our churches is the most reasonable, and the most conformable to the end of preaching. Everybody can read Scripture with notes and comments to obtain simply the sense ; but we cannot instruct, solve difficulties, unfold mysteries, penetrate into the ways of Divine wisdom, establish truth, refute error, comfort, correct and censure, fill the hearers with admiration of the wonderful works and ways of God, inflame their souls with zeal, powerfully incline them to piety and holiness, which are the end of preaching, unless we go further than barely enabling them to understand Scripture." This is a remark conceived in a truly Catholic spirit.

Before we dismiss this celebrated French divine, we must say a word or two on his excellent observations on *appropriate* texts, and the preacher's regard to circumstances, times, places, and persons. In Claude's day the controversy with the Church of Rome was carried on with great zeal and asperity, and the Protestant pulpit was often made the scene of theological combats. M. Daillé, the author of the treatise *On the Right Use of the Fathers*, was in the habit of preaching on the Feast Days of the Church of Rome, and of choosing texts relating to their subjects, so that he might turn them into ridicule, and censure their superstition. Claude condemned this plan, and says : "I do not blame his zeal against superstition, but as for the Romish Feasts, they are for the members of the Church of Rome, and not for us ; and it is certain that our hearers

will neither be instructed nor encouraged by such subjects; and I think they should be preached upon but seldom and soberly." This is admirable advice, and we may be allowed to bring it before those of the clergy who are accustomed to introduce into their pulpits controverted subjects, in which their people can feel but little interest, if any. Protestant congregations are often treated to diatribes against Popery, when, perhaps, they never knew a Papist in their lives, and are in no danger whatever of being beguiled by the Church of Rome. At other times Socinianism is refuted with the same want of appropriateness. The results of such indiscretion are never good, but they are often mischievous. They engender uncharitableness in the hearers; they turn their attention from personal sins and duties; and they frequently suggest doubts and difficulties which were not before thought of. Sermons on the evidences of Christianity have put the hearers in possession of objections to their faith which have much disturbed them; and the errors of the Papacy have been exhibited in such a way as to excite admiration rather than dislike. We remember hearing a sermon in which the self-denial of Romanists was so displayed as to put Protestants to the blush; and we know that it failed in producing the prejudice against Roman Catholics which the preacher intended.

As to the special subjects which should be introduced, Claude writes as follows: "There are particular times which belong to ourselves, and are of two sorts—*ordinary*, which we call *stata tempora*, which every year occur at the same seasons; or

## CHAPTER XIII.

### EARNEST PREACHING.

IF all the papers which have lately been written condemnatory of the preaching of the clergy of the Church of England are examined, it will be found that the story, in almost every case, is the assertion of want of earnestness. Reading like schoolboys; being dry, formal, and uninteresting; wanting life and energy when speaking on the most solemn topics—these are only samples of very many similar charges brought against us, and they all point to the necessity of being earnest and serious in our work—exhibiting feeling in proportion as our subjects may actually demand it. Yet, although this appears a very obvious remark, the manifestation of earnestness in preaching is not always so easy as it seems to be, and solemnity and seriousness of feeling cannot, sometimes, be transferred to the *manner*. We all know cases in which real tenderness and benevolence are accompanied with a blunt and repulsive manner, so that considerable acquaintance is necessary to bring the better qualities to the surface. And it is often so with the preacher; he feels awed by a sense of the Divine Presence, and is conscious of his responsibilities, and estimates rightly the souls committed to his care, and yet his manner in the pulpit is unattractive, and calculated to make no deep impression. The fact is, that the pecu-

liarities of tone, and emphasis, and action, which together produce what is known as *earnestness*, are often beyond the command of the speaker, as much as other qualities which go to constitute an excellent and effective orator. We think it necessary to say as much as this, lest any of our brethren should be pained by a quality being urged as necessary, which may be beyond their power. As feeling may be stimulated when it is not possessed, so it may have a lively existence and yet not be exhibited to others.

But, after all, earnestness should be aimed at and cultivated. In his *Addresses to Candidates for Ordination* the late Bishop Wilberforce says: "Be real with your hearers; strike as one who would make a dint upon their shield of hardness—yea, and smite through it to their heart of hearts. When you preach be real. Set your people before you in their numbers, their wants, their dangers, their capacities; choose a subject, not to show yourself off, but to benefit them. And then speak straight to them as you would beg your life, or counsel your son, or call your friend from a burning house, in plain, strong, earnest words. And that you may be thus real, I would counsel you from the first to take as little of your sermons as possible from those of other men. Let them be your own, made up of truths learnt, on your knees, from your Bible, in self-examination, and amongst your people." Perhaps no rule can be laid down on this subject but that of being *real*, and to cultivate continually a sense of the greatness and solemnity of the work committed to us. Artificial attempts to be earnest



or pathetic will often end in affectation, and the rule of the ancients, *si vis me flere*, etc., must never be forgotten. While, then, the higher kinds of earnestness, exhibiting themselves in pathetic tones of voice, and in a warm and impulsive eloquence, cannot be commanded at will, a dry and careless style may certainly be avoided. The Apostolic advice, "Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee," contains, perhaps, the best rule on this subject, for how can a man be earnest in a work unless he feels its importance to himself and others. It will, therefore, be sufficient to have brought this topic before the clergy, without attempting to furnish rules for what must come naturally, if at all. And then an earnestness springing genuinely from a sense of the importance of the subject will secure a natural mode of delivering it; or perhaps it would be more correct to say that earnestness and naturalness are closely allied, and have a reciprocal bearing upon each other. We quote the following from Professor Shepard, in the *American Biblical Repository*; "Earnestness is important as a means of securing naturalness; it is even indispensable to it, and indeed to all the most desired results of speaking. There cannot be any truly awakening power where there is a stupid and frozen manner. Palpable truth, so uttered, will hardly be believed. The hearer may certainly deny to the speaker the credit of believing his own message, if he lounges and drawls when uttering the warmest and weightiest sentiments. What should we think of the man

who should come and declare to us that his house is in flames, with all the calmness and indifference even with which he would ask for a coal to kindle a morning's blaze? The first impulse would be to tell him he lied. We do often fail in producing conviction by the truth we employ, because we are destitute of the corresponding emotion. The actor, who deals in mere fiction, will agitate, melt, and sway an assembly; whilst those who deal in infinitely momentous truth, frequently diffuse abroad indifference and drowsiness. Why is it? 'Because,' in the often-quoted reply of Betterton to the Bishop of London, 'we are in earnest.'" But, after all, no preaching can be earnest which is not serious, and in the pulpit—one of whose main qualities must always be seriousness—it ought not to be difficult to secure the character of earnestness. Every topic which a preacher can introduce, which can belong legitimately to his profession, must be intimately associated with an earnest opinion and sentiment, either in its substance or the method of its practical application. What possible literary abilities would be sufficient so to re-write the New Testament as to divest it of the quality we are now advocating? Some men have, indeed, a dry, sententious, and witty way of expressing their sentiments, and they could make the subjects of death and eternity produce something approaching to a smile in their methods of illustrating them, but we need not say a word to guard against such an impropriety. There is, however, a vast difference in the style of different preachers in reference to what is impressive and solemn. We would recommend our readers not to

neglect an acquaintance with the best preachers of the Continent, especially of France and Italy. The sermons of Segneri, translated by the Rev. James Ford, and some of those of Bossuet, are eminently pathetic in their illustrations and the mode of introducing them.

This is all true if we are considering *pulpit oratory*; but it may be said, in extenuation, that parish priests cannot be expected to be orators. But they may be honest men; and certainly there is no occasion, in our pulpit efforts, when this earnestness can be out of place. The fact that people in general are propitiated by *reality* in the speaker ought always to be remembered, and induce us to study to excel in the sacred art of earnest preaching. The following extract is worthy of notice, though we have forgotten its source: "The multitude are ready to swallow anything that comes in the shape of rhetoric. They are hungering and thirsting for it; they are lifting up their souls for it, to the pulpit, to the bar, to the senate; they are ready to be instructed, to be moved, to be aroused, transported. Yes, the most obstinate are willing to be enlightened, the most obdurate to be melted, the dullest to be charmed, if the power and the wisdom come in the form of eloquence."

In quoting the following passage from Cowper, we shall refrain from further comment, though we are sorely tempted to be a little critical on the subject of it. Most of us have occasionally met with jocularities, and, though very rarely, with buffoonery, in a preacher; but the solemn reproof of the pious poet is all we need apply:

“He that negociates between God and man,  
 As God’s Ambassador, the grand concerns  
 Of judgment and of mercy, should beware  
 Of lightness in his speech. ’Tis pitiful  
 To court a grin, when you should woo a soul;  
 To break a jest, when pity would inspire  
 Pathetic exhortation; and address  
 The skittish fancy with facetious tales,  
 When sent with God’s commission to the heart!”

It can scarcely be necessary to observe that the expression, *earnest preaching*, really regards an occasional higher degree of a quality which must never be absent from a composition intended to be used as a pulpit address. Seriousness should be impressed upon a sermon from the bare consideration of its nature and design, and should form its whole underlying tone. As a comedy has, from the very necessity of its nature, a humorous strain everywhere pervading it, and capable of being detected even in its more serious portions, so in a sermon there should everywhere be manifested such a degree of solemnity as will prevent the hearer from being shocked by any marked contrast between the place and its circumstances and the utterances of the pulpit.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE BEFITTING STYLE OF PULPIT ADDRESS.

THE style of a discourse is of great importance, meaning by it the *manner* in which the various topics are presented to the audience. It is something different from the language, although style is closely related to the words employed in the composition. Yet, with the same matter, and the same vocabulary, two sermons may be preached whose styles are entirely different. Nor do we mean by style the pronunciation or attitudes of the preacher, which belong rather to the departments of elocution and oratory. In the want of a complete definition of what we mean, these negations may be of use, and so will the positive qualities which we are about to attribute to the style of a pulpit address. It may be plain or figurative, unaffected or pompous, lofty or low, familiar or sedate and stern. The mention of these contrasted qualities will sufficiently indicate what we intend to convey by the *style* of a sermon.

In our opinion a pulpit discourse should be marked by a *chaste earnestness*, in opposition to what is ornate, familiar, and low. We could mention sermons which are popular on account of each of these faults respectively, and it is a remarkable fact that a reputation for good preaching is more often than not dependent on the prominence of one of them. A highly figurative style pleases

half-educated persons, and this accounts for the middle classes being so much attracted by Young's *Night Thoughts*, and Hervey's *Meditations*. Familiarity, more often than not, descending to what is vulgar, is one great secret of the popularity of some metropolitan preachers; and preachers can be found, in most large cities, who are run after because they present commonplace ideas in a coarse and vulgar manner. Happily, the Church of England is pretty free from these inferior styles of preaching, and plainness and simplicity may be safely stated to be the reigning qualities of her pulpit compositions. We attribute this, principally, to the superior education of the clergy, which makes them disdain "clap-trap," and disposes them to what is natural; and the abundant vituperation which they have recently met with in regard to their method of reading and speaking, is, in reality, more attributable to an unstudied plainness than to anything else. *Popular* speaking on platforms is too often only another name for noise and bombast, and a meretricious use of ornament, and when these are altogether wanting, and the speech or sermon is read which, must interest by its matter, if at all, we can scarcely wonder at the charge of dullness. But a *chaste earnestness* will render it impossible for such a complaint to be preferred, while it will be equally remote from the faults by which a lively style is too often disfigured.

It is the best praise we can give of the style we recommend, that it characterises the sacred Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments; and, as if to draw a line between what is divine and human, it is wanting in some of the books of the

Apocrypha. From Genesis to the Revelation we look in vain for inappropriate figures, for what could displease the most refined literary taste, or for what would excite the laughter of an audience, so far all is perfectly chaste and refined ; while, on the other hand, there is no dullness, either in matter or statement—but the earnestness of a real interest, and a deep feeling is found everywhere. The same may be said of the Book of Common Prayer, which, as mainly derived from Holy Scripture, partakes of its ruling qualities. It has often been said that the common language of the English people has been greatly moulded by the use of the Bible,\* and, in the same way, it might be expected that the preachers of our Church should have their style moulded by the Prayer Book and Bible combined. We believe that such is really the case as regards at least the chasteness we are advocating. A pulpit buffoon or mountebank would seem almost an impossible phenomenon among us, although a redundancy of ornament, a too lavish use of figures of speech, is often found to prevail. Far better than this is the *earnestness* we would enforce upon preachers, for it is more in accordance with the objects contemplated by religious addresses, and, when properly used, it will have all the advantages of a tropical style, without its defects.

\* In humble life the Bible was, some years ago, the only library possessed and consulted ; so much so that, in writing a letter, the scribe would often turn to the Bible for the proper spelling of an uncommon word. The vast increase of printed matter in all English homes has, probably, now done away with this custom.

There are two figures which are natural to an earnest style—apostrophe and interrogation, and they are largely used in Holy Scripture. We have both in the striking passage in Hosea : “ O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee ? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee ? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.” When the strain of the address is solemn enough, the introduction of them will have a striking effect, far more so than a more florid style of preaching. Yet great care must be taken, even in the introduction of these natural ornaments of pulpit composition. A Welshman was once preaching on the text, “ Behold, he prayeth ” (Acts ix. 11), and he made these interrogatories : “ Was he slandering his neighbours ? No ! Was he contriving to defraud his neighbour ? No ! Was he indulging sinful desires ? No ! What was he doing, then ? He was praying ! ‘ Behold, he prayeth ! ’ ” This might interest common people, but not sensible ones ; but, introduced with taste and feeling, interrogation is an indication of earnestness, and can always be used with advantage.



## CHAPTER XV.

### EXPOSITORY PREACHING.

THIS consists in taking a certain portion of Scripture, and explaining it without reference to that unity of subject, which we have so much recommended in what is more specially known as a sermon. In the early Church great preachers were generally expositors, as St. Chrysostom, for instance, in his Homilies. The teachers of the primitive Church, in their public instructions, read entire portions of the sacred Scriptures, and in their addresses to the congregation, followed the track of thought of the portion read, and enforced the sentiments by earnest appeals to the conscience and the affections. This also appears to have been the method pursued in the later synagogue worship of the Jews, as it is exhibited in the New Testament. Our Lord read a portion of Scripture, closed the book, and addressed the people on it. And it is said to have been a rule among the Rabbins that not less than twenty-two verses of the Prophets should be read at any one time. At the Reformation expository preaching was much practised, partly, no doubt, from the great ignorance prevailing among the people as to the contents of the Scriptures—for half an hour of exposition would convey far more instruction regarding the Bible than several ordinary sermons would do. The custom still survives in the Church

of Scotland, and every minister there is, more or less, an expounder. It is much to be desired that the practice were revived among us, for it would often be a pleasant relief to the clergyman, and a means of edifying the people.

Not that expository preaching is easy, if done well, or saves the labour of the preacher; but it is a change, and introduces a pleasant variety into services which are necessarily somewhat confined in their range. A dozen or twenty verses may be taken, and a few observations be made on each for the mere purpose of occupying the requisite time; but this is not what we understand by expository preaching. The portion of Scripture should be chosen having some bond of connection in all its parts; and this cohesion and dependence of the verses should guide the preacher in his selection, whether longer or shorter. For instance, in the eighth chapter of St. Matthew there are three distinct cases of healing, followed, in the seventeenth verse, by the declaration that, when even was come he healed all that were sick, and thus fulfilled the saying of Isaiah, "Himself took our infirmities," etc. It is plain that the whole passage, to the end of the seventeenth verse, can be made the subject of an exposition, all the cases illustrating the position of the seventeenth verse. On each case of healing—the leper, the centurion's servant, and Peter's wife's mother can be discoursed on separately. Then follows our Lord's declaration of his poverty, verses 18-22; the stilling of the tempest, 23-27; and the account of the devils entering into the swine, to the end of the chapter, which can

thus be made into six or four separate expositions. If the first act of healing is taken by itself, the preacher may notice that our Lord's previous discourses on the mount had won his hearers so that they followed Him; that he began his miraculous acts immediately he entered on his public ministry. The acts and words of the leper come next; his knowledge of Christ and faith in Him. Our Lord's quick reply, contrasted with His delay in other cases; His desire to be private and not to acquire popularity; and His attention to the law of Moses. These are some of the topics which an exposition of the passage can embrace, and the whole can be bound together with practical observations, applicable to the hearers.

The great advantage of this kind of preaching is that it throws so much light on the meaning of Holy Scripture, and gives an opportunity of exhibiting it in its varied contents, and their connection. Thus, in the above short passage, the nature of leprosy and the laws respecting it can be more appropriately dwelt upon than when a sermon is made on a single text. But, to do this effectively, much study and thought are needed. Books must be consulted; the Concordance must be much used. Men endowed with facility of speech find it easier to discourse on one topic than to expound; for they are less confined by the meaning of a whole passage, and less tied down by rules. As it is well said by an American divine: "Philosophical, occasional, and hortatory preaching are not to be neglected by those who would commend themselves to every man's con-

science in the sight of God ;' but expository preaching should hold the prominent place, and furnish a foundation for all the rest. The exclusively philosophical or hortatory preacher is apt to become like the spider, 'which, as my Lord Bacon saith, 'spinneth her flimsey web entirely from her own bowels.' While the expository preacher, like the bee, extracts the honey from the various flowers which grow in the garden of God, and prepares it for the sustenance and pleasure of man."

Many years ago, an article on preaching appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*. We have forgotten its date and precise tendency, but we well remember that it deeply interested us. One of its paragraphs made a special impression upon us, by its witty appropriateness to the danger of making expository preaching a cloak for ignorant carelessness. The passage was something of this kind, that this method of preaching placed the preacher in the position recommended by our Lord to His disciples, for when they were persecuted in one text they could flee into another. If a man wishes merely to occupy a certain time in his pulpit address, it would certainly require no great skill or study to say something, on a sufficient number of verses, to pass the time away.

It may be useful here to add a few words on the literary appliances of the expositor, or the sources from which his explanations of Biblical texts may be conveniently gathered. While doctrinal and practical reflections can generally

be applied from the preacher's own mental resources—historical, geographical, and other similar facts must be gathered from some competent commentator. A moderate clerical library ought to contain several of these, as it is impossible to find satisfaction in a work on the whole Scriptures written by one pen. But many reliable works, in a condensed form, are now available, which give all the facts we allude to, apart from pious reflections and inferences. As the sources of Biblical information lie over all the field of theological literature, and are available to the youngest of our clergy, it would be superfluous for us to commend any to their especial notice. Some of them are alluded to in other portions of this volume, as the work of Dean Goulburn on the Collects, and that of Mr. Denton on the Epistles and Gospels of our Service. Any reliable Commentary must, of necessity, be a fruitful storehouse for the purposes of exposition.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL PREACHING.

AMONG the various classes of Dissenters, the character of the preachers who occupy the pulpit can frequently be known from the state of their Bibles. Presbyterians north of the Tweed, many of the Baptists, and some few of other sects, confine themselves chiefly to the Epistles, and that part of the pulpit Bible is often worn and torn when the rest of the book is uninjured. On the other hand, the Methodists, and the great bulk of the Independents, distribute their favours more over the whole of the New Testament, preaching pretty equally out of the Gospels and the Epistles, but neglecting Moses and the Prophets. We are writing in all seriousness, having ourselves seen the proofs of partiality in the different conditions of the various parts of the New Testament, and of the whole of the Old.

In the Church of England, some extreme individuals excepted, we think the choice of subjects for preaching is far less partial and fairer to the various departments and portions of the Holy Scripture. As comparatively few clergymen use a Bible in the pulpit, the test we have referred to cannot be applied ; but, from published sermons, and from actual observation and experience, we believe that, in the Church of England, the whole

Bible is more preached from than in any other section of the visible Church. This is owing, in a great measure, to the admirable distribution of the portions of Scripture in our public Services—the historical books, the Psalms, the Gospels, and the Epistles being equally drawn upon for public instruction. This is a noble feature in our Church, and it should be exhibited in the pulpit labours of every parish priest. Doctrinal preaching is presumed to be drawn chiefly from the Epistles; while mere practical—or, as it is often called, *legal* or *moral*—teaching is thought to take its themes from the more didactic portions of the Bible, and so, *vice versa*, can the ethical or Arminian one. It is the principle which rules in the preacher's own mind, and decides and regulates his choice of subjects and their treatment, to which we now more particularly refer, when we speak of doctrinal and practical preaching.

Nothing, we think, indicates more a dry and unfurnished and bigoted intellect than the habit of confining sermons exclusively to either doctrine or practice. All correct religious feelings, and all good conduct, must flow from *principles*, and a public teacher who knows this will ever combine the two. If a doctrine is preached upon, it will only be as the soil out of which a holy practice will grow; and if, on the other hand, some moral duty is enforced, its intimate connection with doctrinal principles will be exhibited. Some preachers proceed on the presumption that if Christ is loved and His work understood, all must go right in the believer, and that there is no need to preach about

*duties.* Can any error be well more fatal? Yet this is hardly worse than the opposite one, of giving out, Sunday after Sunday, portions of a dry morality which a Socrates or a Seneca could have inculcated quite as well. How different is the teaching of our Lord! How widely different the style of exhortation adopted by St. Paul! The latter says—and in the passage a fine specimen of the union we advocate is presented,—“The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.” In fact in this, as in all other things, the Bible should be our guide, and if we observe the proportion of doctrinal and practical teaching, and adapt our sermons to that standard, we shall never go wrong. What glorious morality is contained at the close of the Epistle to the Romans, all depending on the close theological argument which occupies the first portion of it!

It is a favourite idea with some ministers that they must give what they are pleased to call “the Gospel” in every sermon; or, as others express it, they never get into the pulpit without “preaching Christ,” meaning by that the reiteration of certain texts and doctrines which they are pleased to think are more Gospel-like and Christ-like than others. There is some affectation in this, and some error, and a good deal of unreasonableness. The most workmanlike plan, and that most likely to be successful for the edification of a congregation, is to give to every one a portion of meat in due season; to take



texts from all parts of the Bible, and to confine oneself strictly to their discussion and enforcement.

The best advice we can give on this subject is that the young preacher should endeavour to divest his mind altogether of the technical distinction between the doctrinal and the practical, and to view the whole of Divine truth in the beautifully-mingled form in which it is presented in the Bible. We cannot conceive of the distinction existing in the mind of any one of the sacred writers, although in practice they do dwell more on one than on the other when a special object is in view, as in the Epistle of St. James, for instance. When we meditate on a star we recognize, at one and the same time, its light and its form, without ever thinking of separating the one from the other.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### FIGURATIVE AND POETICAL PREACHING.

TO BE more or less tropical in expressing his sentiments is natural to man, and especially so when he discourses on religious subjects affecting the destiny of the race, and appealing to the emotions of the soul, the attributes of our Maker, and the hopes and fears of a future existence. As far as we know this is the case with all nations, and the literature of the Bible, both of the Old and New Testaments, particularly disposes those who regard it as a Divine revelation to use figurative expressions, and to be more or less poetical in their modes of delivering their opinions. The Mosaic cosmogony is eminently poetical in its form, and the whole space between that and the last chapter of the Apocalypse, while enshrining all that is most valuable to man as a religious being, gives out its utterances in tropes and allegories well adapted to rivet the attention and fasten instruction in the minds of the hearers or readers.

All this is quite true to nature, and appeals to the innate conceptions of the human mind, and it is therefore not wonderful that Biblical phraseology should distinguish Christian people whose thoughts, from childhood, are more or less moulded by the Divine pattern. We believe it will everywhere be found that a style of pulpit address, in some degree

tropical, or containing more or less poetical images, will, other things being equal, have a stronger hold upon the audience, so that a metaphor will make more impression than a simile, as is felt to be the case in such sublime passages as the following: "It is the glorious Lord who maketh the thunder," and "He holdeth the winds in his fist." This natural adaptation and employment of tropes takes place in a greater or less degree in the style of every one who stands up to instruct others; but in most instances it excites no attention, because of its commonness. We intend something more than this by the title of this chapter, and the highest abilities of a preacher may well be put forth in the formation of a poetical mode of delivery, or the occasional study and composition of a poetical sermon. We once had sent to us for our criticism a sermon of moderate length in measured rhyme, which we remember was tame enough, and far less impressive than it would have been in simple prose; and two or three attempts of this kind may be found chronicled in Darling's *Cyclopædia Bibliographica*. But we need say no more on this point, as we believe all our readers will have too much good sense to attempt such a method of composing a sermon.

In the printed sermons of our clergy during the latter half of this century, there will be found, we believe, as fine passages of true poetry as have been furnished in any age of the Church, while it must be confessed that in the same space pulpit orators have not been few who have darkened counsel by words without knowledge, by mistaking the true

character of the poet's office in their pulpit ministrations. We might illustrate what we mean by many quotations from the printed sermons of living men, members and ministers of the Anglican Communion; but as we have avoided hitherto all invidious comparisons, we will do so here, with only two exceptions in the case of living authors, previously, however, presenting our readers with a quotation from the late highly gifted F. W. Faber, who, when having the charge of the parish of Ambleside, delivered the following peroration to a sermon intended to elicit the sympathies of a highly intellectual audience for its schools:

"Surely to you, my brethren, who are natives of this place, who are so deeply, so intensely interested in its welfare, it is unnecessary to speak. The heart that feels no yearnings towards the place of its abode is too cold, too dead to be moved by words of mine; colder far and deader than the poor Pagan shepherds who once trod these hills, and lived among their gloomy woods. For they did beautiful things, yea, and holy things, when they hung their delicate wild flowers and green rushes about the trees and wells, albeit they darkly worshipped the Unknown God.

"But there are others, who form no inconsiderable portion of my congregation, on whom it is needful I should urge my cause. There are many strangers here. They may have come among these hills only for pleasure and amusement. Yet, if they did, they must by this have learned among their marvels, their lights and shades, their solitudes and strange recesses, some glorious things of the

Lord their God. Here, where he hath built for His own glory in the wilderness.

“ My brethren, if this country has been to you a fountain of deep and serious thoughts, of holy and moral impressions; if you have looked upon it as in some sense a public domain wherewith God hath gifted our nation; if you have felt your love drawn to its lakes and rivers and hill-side villages, in a way you never felt before and cannot now explain; if you are carrying from it a thousand memories that will never desert you, sights and sounds and heavenly images to haunt you evermore,—can you turn away and not leave a gift unto the Lord our God? Oh! it shall delight you afterwards to remember that upon these mighty hills, as on a holy altar—and altars green and glorious they are, and not of man’s building—you have left your full, free, self-denying offering. Let it be as full and free, as open and ungrudging, as hath been the tide of joys which the land has poured in upon you from the throne of God that is set up so visibly therein. You may never have seen a church of God so decorated as this; you may never see this holy rite again. Make, then, these garlands to minister to piety and holiness. Make them to be connected with the everlasting covenant, a type, a symbol of the freshness and innocence which the early lessons of the Gospel shall shed upon the little ones that would fain sing hosannahs in this mountain temple. Let this festival write upon our hearts a lesson deep and grave to bear unto our homes; and let us leave the holy shrine this day with the words wherewith the three children praised

the Lord their God, a deep and silent yet a thrilling *Benedicite*, filling our souls with thankfulness and love: 'O ye mountains and hills, bless ye the Lord; praise Him and magnify Him for ever. O all ye green things upon the earth, bless ye the Lord; praise Him and magnify Him for ever.' "

We shall make no apology to ourselves or our readers for quoting this fine passage, on the ground that its author devoted the after-years of his life to the service of the Church of Rome. It may be read by the young clergy as an example of the way in which common occasions may elicit high abilities, and also the manner in which a tropical style may give strength and beauty to common-place topics. It may perhaps be of but little use for a preacher to resolve to deliver a poetical sermon, for the inspiration needed for such a work must come spontaneously, if it comes at all. But the will of a preacher may decide whether his next sermon shall not abound more than usual in appropriate figures; and he may rest assured that if the figurative language be but natural, it will give extra pleasure to the audience. We need hardly say that a cultivated mind and a refined taste will be necessary for the successful discharge of this duty.

The first living example we refer to is the Rev. W. John Knox Little, who has lately published a volume of sermons, in which will be found many passages of poetic eloquence of no common kind, and, without further comment, a few quotations will enable our readers to judge for themselves.

The following passage refers to the power of the Cross of Christ :—

“After days and nights of storm the morning rises in calm splendour above the winter sea. The heaving waves roll onwards in solemn stately cadence, quiet now, but carrying, in their deep-toned voices, the echoes of the tempest that has been. The slate-grey clouds lie reef on reef across the vault of heaven, but every edge is tipped with glory, every stretch of lowering canopy is toned, illumined with translucent gold. The moving mass of rolling water takes the shimmer of the sky; here and there, in bright belts, the sunlight pierces through the cloud-reefs, and sleeps upon the bosom of the sea. All whisper of a past, when giant forces met in conflict,—of a present, when the din is silenced and all is peace. Nature is a parable of human struggle. *You* know the struggle, penitent, you know the pardon, you know the peace. It is the tender efficacy of ‘the Cross.’”

A sermon entitled the *Law of Preparation* furnishes similar gorgeous figurative illustrations:—

“Character is like the rose that blows on the summer morning; its deep and splendid colour, its delicate aroma, are the rich result of many united processes of the elements of earth and air, and of the complicated action of its own assimilating powers, whose disposition and arrangement we call its nature. Character is like the weather-harassed tree, notched and gnarled, scourged into weird contortion by the winter blast, in the crannies of the mountain gorge, but with its fresh spring leaves bearing a witness to its nature and its race.”

One more extract must suffice. It is on *The Supernatural Life*, and is far more figurative than

anything we remember to have read in a sermon:—

“I stood upon the jagged crest of Klimserhorn. It was early morning, the night had been one of raging storm, the morning broke chill and grey. Thick impenetrable masses of mists swept past us; once and again a stronger breeze hurried more rapidly along the volume of vapour, broke in for an instant, and gave us a faint, a passing glimpse of glory. . . . Suddenly, as by an unseen hand, the thick opposing curtains of the clouds were rolled away, and there, beneath us, lay in sunny loveliness the thrilling spectacle, the unfolded panorama of the lake and the mountains, with creeks and bays, with peaks and promontories from Fluelen to Lucerne. Now *that* is like the supernatural life. It *is*, and it is lovely; but for long and often, it is hidden from the soul.”

Those of our readers who have access to the London Saturday newspapers must be aware that their advertisement columns have, of late years, been rather full of enticing recommendations to attend particular churches or chapels, the topics used as baits being mostly of a sensational character—political, social, and sometimes even poetical. Mr. Haweis, minister of the church of St. James, Marylebone, recently delivered there a series of lectures, since published, with the title of *Poets in the Pulpit*, being a series of criticisms, with biographical notices and extracts of Longfellow, Tennyson, Robert Browning, Keble, George Herbert, Wordsworth, and a more miscellaneous discourse, supported by Mr. Palgrave's volume, entitled the *Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics*. It does not



follow, of course, that because these sermons were founded on the lives and writings of poets, they were themselves poetical in the sense intended by us in this chapter; nor does it follow that the preacher, or rather the lecturer, is himself a poet. We notice the volume rather, as giving occasion to us to remark on the way in which poetical quotations may be made to give an additional interest to pulpit discourses. A striking line or verse may often effectively illustrate some noble Scriptural sentiment, giving to it—

“A double charm, like pearls upon an Ethiop’s arm,”

but to effect this the preacher must have himself the true poetic instinct, and we fear that the greater number of versified extracts employed in ordinary sermons rather deteriorate than improve, artistically, the subject to which they are attached; and we cannot refrain from remarking, in this connection, that all illustrative quotations, whether poetic or not, should tend to exalt Divine Truth, and not to lower its value, as may easily be done. The great objection we have to this novel mode of employing the pulpit adopted by Mr. Haweis, is, that poetry is too often admired for what may be called its secular beauties than for its power to add an extra charm to the beauty of truth and holiness. What serious Christian could endorse all that has been written by the poets in Mr. Haweis’ selection? nor does the following quotation from one of the lectures give us a very high opinion of Mr. Haweis’ discretion, in relation to the boundaries of catholic truth and a popular heterodoxy. In quoting a poem

of Campbell, at the conclusion of the series of lectures, he takes occasion to say that it is, "a perfect contrast to Shelley." "It is sober, didactic, yet with a certain lightness of touch, and a tinge of pathos and regret, which save it from the commonplace of Pope or the dullness of Addison." We object, in the strongest terms, to any allusion, in the pulpit, to the name of Shelly, except as a beacon and a warning. Sad, indeed, would it be if, by only using this name, any unwary spirit, listening in God's temple, should be attracted to a man who, while highly gifted by a poetical faculty, was mainly distinguished through life by the grossest sensualism, and used all his efforts to degrade woman by a contempt of the recognised laws of marriage. In accordance with the object of this chapter we should do injustice to our best feelings if we did not allude to that wonderful treasury of Divine Wisdom, the metrical Psalms and Hymns of the Universal Church, which, like the psalms of the Old Testament, furnish believers with so many encouragements of their faith, hope, and charity. A clergyman in the pulpit neglects a charming and powerful method of attracting the attention of his hearers, and of exciting their best emotions, who does not read through the hymns before they are sung by the people. We much regret that—for some conventionalism, inexplicable to ourselves—the *Hymns Ancient and Modern* are generally introduced to the people by their number only, with a text of Scripture arbitrarily prefixed in the printed book. How immense must be the loss inflicted on a pious congregation—especially

on those who cannot read—when this dry method is pursued, in comparison to reading, with appropriate feeling, two of these hymns through in the course of a service! We are sorry to have to say that, in some instances, a dry homily, occupying a quarter of an hour, could be much better dispensed with than two or three of these beautiful hymns.

A specimen of appropriate poetical quotation may be here given, occurring, as it did recently, in our own experience. When speaking of “the spirits of just men made perfect,” the preacher described their happiness as arising from the presence of Christ, and then quoted a verse from that beautiful hymn “Love is the sweetest bud that blows.” It is as follows:—

“ O what a garden will be seen,  
When all the flowers of grace  
Appear in everlasting green,  
Before the planter's face!

“ Christ is their Shade, and Christ their Sun,  
Among them walks the King,  
Whose presence is eternal noon,  
Whose smile eternal spring!”

We must not forget that the figures of these poetical lines are the same in substance as the following beautiful passage in Psalm xcii.: “The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.”

We feel we cannot leave this subject without alluding to the historical fact that sermons in metre,

addressed to the popular mind, were written and delivered by S. Ephraem, the Syrian, to the people of Edessa, in the fourth century. In the Syriac works of Ephraem, edited by Assemani, and published at Rome, in folio, in the last century, will be found a large collection of hymns and homilies in a metrical form, some of which were translated into English, and published in 1853, by the present writer, in two volumes, with introduction and notes. The whole subject is exceedingly curious, one of the homilies, entitled the "Repentance of Nineveh," is of considerable length, occupying nearly the whole of the second of these volumes, so long, indeed, that it can hardly have been delivered as one homily. That Ephraem's heptasyllabic stanzas were preached as sermons is stated by the translator as follows:—

"There is abundant proof that the metrical homilies of Ephraem were composed for popular audiences. At the period of the history of the world, when books were produced by a slow and expensive process, there is *à priori* evidence of this, which receives confirmation from the pieces themselves. Their metrical form is, indeed, an *argumentum ad populum*, an evident expedient to catch the ear and assist the memory. Then there are direct appeals to a listening auditory found everywhere in these writings, presenting Ephraem to us as sustaining the relation of a careful pastor to an attentive and admiring flock."

Probably our clerical friend alluded to above, who presented us with a sermon in English verse, was not aware of the high and ancient example

which he followed, *hanc æquis passibus*. As many of our readers are not likely to be acquainted with this recondite subject we will quote a few lines, as a fair specimen of the style of the whole homily :—

“ The King remained in trouble,  
And diligently inspected the city ;  
He decreed a fast for his camp,  
And supplied it with the armour of truth ;  
He called his regiments to prayer,  
For that was their only safety.  
He proclaimed an earnest supplication,  
A bow whose arrows would be victorious ;  
Armour which would surround the oppressed,  
And a fierce sword for those wielding it.

“ When the King had inspected these,  
And carefully armed his regiments ;  
He turned himself to give weapons to the city,  
The men and the women together ;  
That the whole people unitedly,  
Might do battle for their safety.  
By his own sackcloth he set an example ;  
He armed the city with sackcloth.  
It was the son of Nimrod, the mighty one,  
It was a warrior, and a hunter,  
Who leaving off to slay great wild beasts,  
Slew, in the place of the beasts of the field,  
The hateful sins of his people.  
Instead of things hunted in the field,  
He purged the city from crimes.  
He let alone the wild creatures without,  
And killed the iniquities within.  
He rejected the poison of dragons,  
And sweet'ned his disposition by fasting.  
In place of the chariot of his majesty,  
He visited the city on foot ;  
He called on all his people,  
That he might awaken them to repentance.  
The King wandered in a private manner,

That he might purge them from impurity ;  
He walked about in humility,  
That he might establish the agitated city ;  
In places of low resort  
He sowed tranquillity among the streets.”

These examples of the use of art in the preaching of the Early Church, may go a little to justify the title of this volume, *The Art of Preaching*, should any one object to it on the ground that preaching is a Divine institution with Divine promises attached to its performance. But a yet stronger defence will be found in the fact that some portions of Holy Scripture have an artistic method exhibited in their composition. We need only refer the Biblical student to Psalm cxix., whose twenty-two portions present the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet eight times in the eight verses of which each portion consists. As we have, in this chapter, touched on the subject of Pulpit Curiosities, we will conclude with a specimen of a poetical treatise, with the following title, which was presented to us by a friend some years ago. It is a small octavo of ninety pages :—

“ *Advice to a Parson ; or, The True Art of Preaching, in Opposition to Modern Practice.* Written by a Person of Honour to Dr. S——, his late Chaplin ; Made Public Chiefly for the edification of both Universities. Printed in the year, M.DC.XC.I.” It is a cynical and caustic production, as will appear by the following :—

“ Still you continue, *Preaching*, to Profess ;  
Then pack your Labour'd Follies, to the Press :  
But, *Parson*, You'l at length be fain to own,  
'Tis the most Irksome, Crabbed Trade in Town.

What's *Hardship*? You reply, to Me, Inspir'd,  
To Natural Parts, who Science have acquir'd;  
More luckily ne're did *M*—— in the Hall,  
His Brother *Serjeant* Interrupting baul:  
My Graceful Person long has took at Court,  
Of which, the *Fifty* Chaplains All came short;  
My Postures, well-shap'd Hand, and sparkling Eye,  
Command Attention from the Laity:  
My Voice strikes quite, to the Circumference  
Of all my Numerous, Thronging Audience.  
I speak pure English, and the Methods know,  
To handle a Discourse, and Vary too:  
*Waller* I Top, on *Dryden* I refine,  
Whose clever Style, more properly is Mine:  
More than *Ben. Johnson*, does to me belong,  
To make a *Grammar* for the *English* Tongue.  
I *Rapin's* Learned Volumes have read o're,  
Which makes me know my self an Orator:  
I, in his Pages, nothing have descry'd,  
What Nature had not in my self supply'd."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### PULPIT TREATMENT OF SCEPTICAL AND INFIDEL OPINIONS.

THE ideas suggested by this heading can only take practical effect in peculiar circumstances. We have before alluded to the necessity of using great prudence in introducing political and other controverted topics into the pulpit; and, as a rule, the same caution would apply to those subjects indicating a weakened or abandoned faith in the grand Articles of our holy religion. As long as the pastor of a parish can preach as though none misbelieved and none seriously doubted, it will be the best policy to do so, for suggestions and instructions intended to do good may work positive evil if they present sceptical notions which have never before been heard of in the congregation. Where a clergyman is aware that any one of his parishioners has been drawn away from the faith by an unbelieving companion, or by the reading of infidel publications, the wiser course will be to converse with him privately, and endeavour to stop the progress of error by a kind statement and inculcation of the opposite truth. The clergy, as a body, are naturally inclined to be impatient of any intellectual opposition, since the very theory of their office is that they are to be the teachers, and not the taught. There may thus be formed, almost without our acknowledging it to



ourselves, a disposition to ignore the doubts and difficulties of young persons; and, if such subjects are admitted into the pulpit at all, to treat them with little respect, as being rather disreputable and unworthy any very serious confutation. But we should be false to our position, and to our vows, if we declined to grapple with such difficulties; for we promise, at our Ordination, not only to teach the truth, but to drive away error.

This word of advice may be sufficient in reference to hundreds, perhaps thousands, of rural parishes and small towns, where scepticism may be kept in check by private instruction, or by a slight degree of public notice, as a farmer might keep down the tares in a field by using the spud in his walks. But it must be confessed—and we do it with great reluctance—that all over the land there are large spaces where the seeds of infidelity have been scattered abroad like the feathered down of the thistle, springing up with such rapidity that they call for every effort at extermination which can be put forth by the clergy. A short time ago we felt almost horrified by the confessions of the *Standard* newspaper, as to the immense hold which scepticism and infidelity have on the reading public, and the pernicious influence which they have already exerted on the welfare of large classes of the community. It has long been a subject of grief to sincere Christian men that our leading newspapers have systematically ignored any dogmatic recognition of Christianity, and treated the Bible and the Church as though they were not existent, except, indeed, as the Church may be regarded in its polemical

aspects. We were therefore much gratified at finding it stated, in a leading article of the *Standard*, that a certain amount of gloom was spreading over society at large by the active propagation and extensive belief in Agnosticism and Secularism. After describing the evident increase of a sombre character among all classes, and attributing it to the diminished power of various amusements which once made the whole people glad, the writer presents us with the following very sad conclusion, which we here quote, in the hope that every line of it may make a deep impression upon all the clergy who may honour these pages with their attention :—

“ But below all these causes of depression there lies a far deeper one—the loss, among thousands, of religious faith and hope, and the reaction of their scepticism throughout a still larger circle of minds not convinced either way, but distressed and bewildered, or, at least, sorrowful at the gulf which separates them from the Agnostics whom they love, and who regard them as dreamers. It is quite true that the old faith, in its perverted forms, held out dreadful terrors, and this world was represented too often by its preachers as a ‘City of Wrath,’ a ‘Vale of Tears.’ But even the dark background of intensest Calvinism seems scarcely to leave the picture of life so utterly cheerless and grey as the Agnosticism of the present day, and the half-hysterical efforts of its apostles to announce it as a gospel of good tidings, seem to the pitying listener only the keenest note of despair. The ‘Posthumous Activities of the Soul,’ which one of them would make ‘at once the basis of philosophy, the standard

of right and wrong, and the centre of a religion'—these vague impersonal activities to work when we have ceased to be,—offer a poor exchange, indeed, for the hope of an everlasting conscious service to be rendered in a purer world than this; even as the prospect of burial—senseless clay beside the senseless clay of our beloved ones—is a mockery to the heart which yearns to cry, 'Then, soul of my soul! I shall meet thee again, and with God be the rest.' While this incubus lies upon us there can be no whole-hearted cheerfulness amongst us. Doubting Castle is, as it ought to be, a dreary place, a dismal prison of souls; and till some Great Heart comes by the way and demolishes it, the shadow of its towers must lengthen over the land."

Concurrently with this solemn warning in a daily newspaper of great influence, is a similar one from his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the Charge to his Clergy in the recent triennial Visitation. As this Charge can be seen and read by all the clergy, there is no necessity for us to analyze it minutely. But we feel it our duty to quote the following, as containing statements and reflections of great permanent value, and as coming within our earnest purpose in calling the attention of our readers to the subject. His Grace said:—

"Within the last few years signs had not been wanting of some of those who would reduce Christian doctrine to very meagre limits, not hesitating to avail themselves of the fleeting popular taste for outward ceremonial, and making, in appearance, a strange alliance with the system to which in truth they were most distinctly opposed. There was, he

held, real ground to fear lest the tendencies of the age resulted in the prevalence among them of a lax view of Christian doctrine and teaching in many respects unlike anything with which the country had in former times been familiar. Presenting itself under the guise of an improved and more rational Christianity,—speaking with the greatest respect of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles, professing to regard them as great benefactors of the human race, and even admitting that historical Christianity was in some sense a wonderful manifestation of God brought near to man,—it virtually substituted a new in place of the old genuine Gospel. The old Unitarianism had something in it akin to this system, and many modern Unitarians seemed to have adopted it. They did not deny that its promoters had high aims—a zeal for the pure morality of the Gospel, and many lofty aspirations after holiness and intercourse with God. But convinced as he was that there was something very hollow in it, he could not look on without alarm if attempts were made to present children and young people with that substitute for the real Gospel. If that prevailed he feared that he must bid farewell to a true conception of human nature and the hatefulness of sin,—the most powerful motives which could guide human life,—and be content to sink to views of Christian unity and the elevation of the Christian character very different from those which animated the Apostles. A Christianity with the supernatural element eliminated from it would have appeared to them, as it justly appeared to all the clergy, to be no Christianity at all.”

The Archbishop seemed to take it for granted that all the clergy are personally unmoved by these popular forms of infidelity, and we believe this is true in reference to the grosser and more daring of them. But we have noticed a somewhat wide diffusion of an eclecticism which respects the outward form of truth more than its inward substance, and exhibits a too friendly familiarity with those who defend only a part of Divine truth, and defend it, too, with doubtful weapons. A common object of attack, with vast numbers of ill-informed persons, is our Lord's strongly dogmatic teaching on the future life and its punishments. A great deal has been written on both sides of this question, and we are sorry to be obliged to say that some popular preachers and writers have betrayed the citadel by a faint defence, or by dangerous admissions. The same may be said of other cardinal Articles of Christian teaching, and some sermons were lately delivered in the Cambridge University pulpit by a popular writer and preacher, which turned into ridicule a great many of the received opinions on Biblical criticism and exegesis. Young men are inclined to grasp at new theories, and we fear lest the *ad captandum* and specious objections of the orator should lay the foundation of Agnosticism, or something like it, in the minds of more than one undergraduate. Our readers will admit that this may be the truth of the case, although we cannot for one moment attribute such a purpose to the preacher.

We cannot but hope that the pungent remarks of the *Standard*, so emphatically corroborated by

the solemn expostulations of the Primate, will call earnest attention to the admitted evil and lead to wise and prayerful efforts for its cure. But we are not sanguine on this point, for society at large has become widely and sadly indifferent to the claims of dogmatic theology, and treats Divine statements and teachings with a dangerous levity. What sceptics and infidels seem most persistently to aim at is the denial of a personal God. We trust all our readers have experienced too much comfort and hope from their belief in the existence of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as everywhere present, and so attentive to the wants of all His creatures that a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His knowledge, or a hair of our head perish. We will not pursue the subject further, but express a hope that the clergy who read these pages, will, from their own love of the truth, and their personal experiences of the blessings of a hearty Christian faith, leave no efforts untried to confirm their hearers in what, from old time, has been delivered to us. As students of Holy Scripture they have both the bane and the antidote in their hands, for in both the Old and the New Testaments the same infidelity is brought under our notice as that which now troubles our Church, though in varying forms. The third chapter of Genesis clearly points to an unsanctified desire for knowledge as the primeval sin, and St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, amplifies the theme, and shews how the abuse of the intellect, in the ancient Greek and Roman world, led, *first*, to the neglect of the Divine teaching conveyed in the things that were made; *secondly*, to

idolatry in all its forms; and, *thirdly*, to a gross sensuality. The process is the same in all ages and countries, and it will be well for England if a judicial blindness does not make Christian people regardless of the terrible facts.

We cannot refrain from commending to the notice of our readers a Paper on Agnosticism read at the Church Congress at Leicester, in reference more particularly to a work on that subject by Mr. Herbert Spencer, an advanced teacher of that fanatical and misguided school. The assertions quoted by Mr. Row, from this most recent defence of Agnosticism are, in our opinion, as foolish as they are blasphemous; but it is the fashion in these days to treat with seriousness men and their writings which ought to be consigned to the limbo of oblivion. As these infidel publications exist, and receive attention by the press, it is important that the clergy should be acquainted with them; and this necessary information will be found in the records of the Conference of 1880. We quote, from the *Standard*, the following admirable advice to the clergy on the best mode of treating scepticism:—

“The clergy of the Church of England will do well to study closely the Archbishop of Canterbury’s searching analysis of modern scepticism, and to turn their attention to the question whether they are, in all cases, on the right road for discovering an antidote for the bane. Some satisfaction may be derived from the circumstance that the sinister spiritual phenomenon which the Archbishop deprecates has at least about it little or nothing of novelty. Rational-

ism, by whatever name it may be called, is a commonplace in the history of thought. It is not confined to religion alone, and it probably comes as naturally to some minds as implicit faith does to others. There is no more reason to suppose that the scientific Theism of the present day is likely to be more permanent than any other phases of scepticism. It does not supply the spiritual needs of human nature. It ministers no hope for the future or solace for the present. Moreover, it is logically unsatisfactory, and combines, with much of indifferentism, much of intolerance and tyranny. In regard to Revealed Religion it has no pretensions to exercise more than a negative influence. In other words it does not make any attempt to replace what it would destroy. Religion does what science does not. It supplies and it explains the existence of a Great First Cause. Science only deals with the succession of phenomena, and ignores their origin. It is with their origin that religion is primarily concerned. Here, then, is the true secret of the strength which belongs to the clergy as the teachers of religion. It is a secret which should make them confident of their own ultimate success, and which should do something more—it should teach them that Science and Religion may exist side by side, and may be animated by a spirit of mutual toleration. Nothing can be more contemptible than the cheap, flippant, coarse infidelity with which the clergyman often has to deal. But the temper in which it is best met is that of earnest calmness. The greatest mistake the clergyman can commit is to seize it as the opportunity for an indictment against the tendencies and



results of scientific teaching. It is not for the clergyman to commence with proclaiming the existence of the feud between Natural Philosophy and Revealed Religion. His duty is to shew that Christianity is, at the same time, a Divine and a practical faith; that it has sanctions and consolations which science has not; and that at the point where science fails its illuminating and energizing power begins."

We think it will be an advantage to our readers to print Mr. Row's Paper *in extenso*. We hope and believe that, in the case of every clergyman in communion with the Church of England, any further refutation of Agnosticism than is here given will be quite unnecessary. How sad is the thought that men, otherwise gifted, can admit as truths such propositions, if, indeed, they can really do so! But as the world by wisdom knew not God in our Lord's days, and philosophers "professing themselves to be wise became fools," so is it now, and happy are those who, by the influence of Christian principles, cannot thus be "led captive by Satan at his will."

Prebendary Row says:—

"Agnosticism is at the present day the fashionable form of unbelief among cultivated society. It is also the most plausible, for while it avoids many of the difficulties with which other systems are encumbered it arrives at the same practical results. What, then, is Agnosticism? The Agnostic is very careful to distinguish his philosophical (may I not even say his religious?) creed from all the isms of the past or the present. The insinuation that Agnosticism is only a disguised form of atheism

he indignantly denounces. Pantheism, pure and simple, he rejects. While holding much in common with Positivism, he repudiates several of its most important positions. While he denounces every form of theism which has been held by mankind during the past and the present as involving contradictions in thought, and as no better than Anthromorphism, yet, by the mouths of its two great prophets,—Mr. H. Spencer in England, and Mr. Fiske in America,—Agnosticism proclaims itself to be not only theistic, but the only rational theism. Both of these writers affirm that a belief in the existence of a First Cause of the universe, which we may, if we please, designate God, is a necessity of thought. But while they make this concession to theism, they lay it down as a fundamental truth that owing to the nature of our faculties, this First Cause must for ever remain unknowable and inscrutable by man; to affirm that God is a being who unites in Himself the conceptions of the infinite, the absolute, and the first cause involves us in hopeless logical contradictions; that He has created the finite is simply unthinkable, and to affirm any attribute respecting Him is nothing else than to deify a number of finite human conceptions.

“From these premises a number of consequences follow, the importance of which it is hardly possible to exaggerate. We cannot predicate of Him either personality, or consciousness, or intelligence, for these are merely human conceptions, and not objective realities. We cannot, therefore, affirm that He is holy, or just, or benevolent, or the moral Governor of the Universe,

or the rewarder of virtue, or the punisher of vice. In a word, the God of the Agnostic is an infinite algebraic X, the value of which is insoluble in any known quantities of human thought, to whom if worship is rendered it must not be a service of which reason can take cognisance, but it must be of the silent sort, offered through the imagination to the Unknowable and the Inscrutable. Its philosophy—which, for the sake of brevity, may be designated the Agnostic theory of evolution—is one of the most portentous dimensions, being nothing short of an attempt to propound a philosophy which shall embrace the whole universe of phenomena, past, present, and to come, including man intellectually, morally, and socially, under the reign of one necessary law—the law of evolution. So important a place does Mr. Spencer assign to these two last subjects in his system that he informs us, in his recently published work, entitled *The Data of Ethics*, that all his previous labours have been subsidiary to the elaboration of a work in which he designs to place the principles of morality on a scientific basis. He tells us that this work is a fragment of a larger one yet incomplete, but which the state of his health and his advancing years render it probable that he may not live to finish. ‘To leave this purpose,’ says he, ‘unfulfilled, after making so extensive a preparation for it, would be a failure, the probability of which I do not like to contemplate. Hence the step I now take’—*i.e.*, the publication of an incomplete work. Truly this quotation forms a striking commentary on the plaintive utterance of the old Hebrew Psalmist—

‘Surely man walketh in a vain shadow and disquieteth himself in vain,’ for after this uncertain life, when its painful struggles are over, our individual personalities, according to this philosophy, will be absorbed into the great ocean of being, or, in simple language, pass into everlasting nothingness !

“ By a singular Nemesis, this philosophy claims to base itself on the principles laid down in the celebrated lectures of Dean Mantel. That gifted writer conceived the idea of smiting German unbelief with its own sword of abstract metaphysics ; but, in the excess of his zeal to demolish his opponents, he failed to observe that it was a two-edged instrument, which could be used, at any rate apparently, for the purpose of inflicting a mortal wound on religion itself. The fundamental principle which lies at the foundation of those systems which undertake to grapple with our conceptions of the Infinite, the Absolute, and the First Cause, is, because human reason cannot formulate in logical propositions the mode in which these conceptions harmoniously coexist in the Divine Mind ; that all our conceptions of God as Infinite, Absolute, and the First Cause of all things are logically untenable. But still more dangerous is the assumption, that because God is infinite—and, therefore, incapable of being embraced in the fulness of His infinity in definite conceptions of the logical intellect—our conceptions of His moral attributes are relative, and not representations of the actual realities of His Being. From this it is argued that the human ideas of holiness, justice, and benevolence are no adequate representations of those attributes as they

exist in God, as if, forsooth, justice ceases to be justice, or benevolence benevolence, because they are attributes of an infinite Being. Many of us, doubtless, remember Mr. Mill's well-known criticism of this position. I think that, *minus* its profaneness, it must be endorsed by every Christian Theist. In fact, if our knowledge of the moral attributes of God is regulative only, and not real, I am utterly unable to conceive in what sense the Incarnation can be true; for unless there is in God a moral character, which is adequately represented by that of our Lord as it is delineated in the Gospels, it is impossible that Jesus Christ can be the Image of the invisible God. But the Agnostic philosophy further affirms that we can know nothing of the moral character of the Infinite, either regulative or absolute, or whether that which it designates God has any moral character at all.

“Happily, however, I am not called on to discuss the principles of this philosophy. I have only to deal with a single point, which is, if the principles of Agnosticism are assumed as true, what are their moral and social tendencies? As I have already intimated, the first article of the Agnostic creed is, I believe in a First Cause of the universe, of which all phenomena are manifestations, yet respecting it nothing can be known by man except that it exists. How a Being of which all phenomena are manifestations can be utterly unknowable and inscrutable is as difficult to me to understand as most of the conceptions which this philosophy pronounces to be incapable of being realised in

thought. The following result, however, is no doubtful matter :—If we can know nothing about God, it follows that the whole of human life must be regulated without any reference to Him. For all moral purposes He is useless. To speak of acting from a sense of duty or of love to Him, or of feeling ourselves responsible to Him as our moral Governor, is simply to utter words without meaning ; and the exhortation to be holy, because the Lord our God is holy, might have been well enough for ignorant people who lived 3,500 years ago ; but to the enlightened minds of the nineteenth century it is an unmeaning phrase, incapable of being formulated in thought. Agnosticism, therefore, as a system, pronounces a complete divorce between morality and the religious principle in man. It follows, therefore, that the elevation of man's moral character, if such elevation is possible, must be effected without any reference to a God. Agnosticism is, therefore, moral atheism. Not a few Agnostics go so far as to assert that the past influence which religion has exerted on morals has been highly pernicious. I shall not dispute that it has been so with many religious systems ; but in discussing questions of this kind the appeal ought to be made, not to the degraded religions of the past, but to religion in its highest form, as it is exhibited in the teaching of our Lord.

“ Further, the principles of this philosophy proclaim that the belief of man's existence beyond the grave is a figment of the imagination, and that all scientific evidence proves that the individual personality of each of us perishes at death. It follows,

therefore, that we, as individuals, have simply to do our best with regard to the present life, with the termination of which our personal consciousness will be dissolved. This being so, it follows that the most holy and the most wicked man, after death, have neither fears nor hopes, but will alike repose in the sweet sleep of unconsciousness. Now, I am ready to admit that the Agnostic philosophers propound an elevated system of morality. In fact, the difficulty of propounding such a system, after eighteen centuries of Christian teaching, is not great. But the great and all-important question is—taking man as he exists in a state of moral degradation—how can any elevated system of morality get beyond the paper on which it is written, and become a living reality? But the Agnostic gets rid of every moral and spiritual force which Christianity brings to bear on the character of the individual, and in its place propounds nothing but a gospel of the blackest night! What, then, is the power which Agnosticism invokes for the regeneration of man, and what forms its only substitute for the power exerted by religion? The answer to this is that man will be elevated slowly and gradually in conformity with the universal law of evolution. In conformity with that law he has grown into what he is, from the lowest forms of life, during the countless ages of the past; and, according to that law, he will go on very slowly improving, throughout the countless ages of the future. His perfection will be attained when, by a long and protracted shuffling between his internal condition and his environment, the one becomes perfectly adjusted to

the other. Judging by the facts of past progress, it seems to me that several millions of years must elapse before even this state of things can be approximately attained. But, as individuals, in this consummation we shall not share. We must look forward with powerful faith to a period when humanity will be glorified, but as for ourselves we must be content, after all our struggles, to succeed in elevating ourselves only a few inconsiderable degrees above our present condition, and die.

"To do Agnostics justice, they are far from satisfied with the past or the present condition of man, and I presume that they would rejoice if they could see him improve somewhat more rapidly than the laws of evolution render possible. Mr. Fiske, however, from the lofty pedestal on which he has seated himself, seems to contemplate the degradation of the masses and the slowness of their elevation with the calmness worthy of a Stoic, which almost reminds one of the cynical observation once offered by a different order of thinkers, 'This people that knoweth not the law are cursed.'

"What, then, is the bearing of Agnosticism on moral obligation ?

"1. The Agnostic, in deference to certain metaphysical nightmares, has arrived at the conclusion that all the sanctions which religion has been supposed to furnish to morality may be dispensed with as being no better than illusions. He allows, indeed, that they may have had their use in the days of ignorance, but they are now mere worn-out garments, fit only for the rag-bag. Now, consider what this means. Moral obligation for the future



must be content with those sanctions which the theory of Agnostic evolution supplies, and we must cease from attempting to reinforce them by appealing to those furnished by the principles of theism, or from those which multitudes of Christian men have in their actual experience found to be the mightiest of all motives to impel them to holiness, and to be the most deterrent from evil—viz., the relation in which Christianity represents mankind to stand to Jesus Christ. All motives which centre in God are simply eliminated out of the Agnostic system as old wives' fables.

“ 2. The Agnostic cannot deny that the sanctions by which he can enforce the moral law on the masses are weak. In good truth, as they are set forth in Mr. H. Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, long æons must roll away before they can be appreciated by any except a select circle of Agnostic philosophers. The prospects, therefore, of the masses of mankind, if this system constitutes the only gospel for humanity, are dismal enough. Their condition, after ages of gradual progress in the past, is still one of painful moral degradation. Their future elevation can only be at the snail's pace of Agnostic evolution, by the gradual accumulation of slightly improved habits transmitted through myriads of generations. Mr. H. Spencer, it is true, has provided a millennium for man somewhere in the remotest æons of the future, when, after an endless shuffling between man and his environment, both shall at length completely harmonise; but then all the past generations of mankind, ourselves included, will have passed into eternal silence. For our-

selves, the utmost that we can hope is, that some fragment of ourselves may pass into the body of some individual member of this glorified humanity. I appeal to your common sense to determine what must be the tendency of these principles.

“Further, if Agnosticism is true, our individual consciousness and personal being is bounded by the present life, after the termination of which the consequences of our actions to ourselves ceases. From this it follows that life, being ended, it will be exactly alike to the prosperous wicked man and the suffering righteous one. Let me illustrate by an example. Probably, a greater villain never lived than Fouchè, who died in his bed loaded with riches and honours. With one single exception, no greater sacrificer of self for the interest of his fellows has ever existed than the Apostle Paul, who suffered the loss of all things and died by the axe of the executioner. I must again appeal to your common sense. What must be the tendencies of such doctrines on the mass of mankind? are they likely to prove a restraint on their passions in favour of holiness and virtue?

“Finally, the principle of Agnostic evolution is fatal to human responsibility. I am fully aware that the Agnostic will not admit this position. What I mean is, that it is fatal to that principle as far as it can influence the masses of mankind, and that the principle of human responsibility, as it is propounded by this philosophy, can only be made influential on that very select class who alone are capable of penetrating its depths, if even of them.

“What account, then, does this philosophy give

of us, as individuals and moral beings? Of what do we consist?

“The answer which it returns to these questions is very definite. We are each of us the results of the successive evolutions of the great *Tò Πάν* during the infinite ages of the past. Our intellectual and moral being has emerged out of the struggles of a succession of ancestors, with their environments, which, by adjusting themselves to each other, have made us what we are. Intellectually and morally we consist of bundles of habits, which have been transmitted to us through many million generations, the overwhelming majority of which have been brutes. Hence, it follows that each of us is the creature of our surroundings. They have made us what we are; and the contributions which we can make to the formation of our own characters are indefinitely small. Everything which composes man has been evolved in conformity with the unvarying laws of physical causation. Hence it follows that in the coming ages of enlightenment the history of man will be capable of being written with the precision of a mathematical problem, and the actions of individuals predicted with as much certainty as the motions of the moon and planets. I am aware that Agnostics are indignant at being designated fatalists, but, whether it be fatalism or not, it is evident, if the principles of this philosophy are accepted by the masses, they must be subversive in their minds of all sense of responsibility for their actions. How can it be otherwise? We, ordinary people, can only feel ourselves responsible for what we feel that we are free to do or to avoid. Once persuaded us that

we cannot help doing a thing, and a sense of guilt becomes impossible, and the sublimest virtue has no more merit in it than the instincts of the lowest animals, or the action of a steam-engine. This being so, there can be neither sin nor guilt; good conduct is the result of good calculation, and bad conduct of bad calculation. All morality is, therefore, relative, and there is no such thing as abstract right and wrong—nay, further, conscience itself is only a temporary phenomenon, which will disappear when man shall be finally adjusted to his environment. Even the sense of duty, which, together with the contemplation of the starry heavens, were the two things which inspired the mind of Kant with awe, have no higher origin than a feeling of fear with which some of our savage ancestors became inspired under the tyranny of the stronger.

"What, then, are the conclusions which would certainly be drawn from these principles if they were to become generally accepted by the masses of mankind? They would, not without reason, plead, Our bad actions, being the necessary results of transmitted habits, are not our sins, but our misfortunes. You tell us that we cannot help yielding to our strongest motives. If so, when we yield to the motive which is uppermost, we incur no guilt. Whether it is best to sacrifice oneself for the good of others, or to indulge one's most selfish appetites, is a mere matter of calculation. Your calculating machine may inform you that virtue is the road to the highest happiness; mine tells me that the best thing to do is to eat and drink, and to die to-morrow; at any rate, when life is ended (and nothing is easier than

to bring it to a termination), it will be alike to you and to me.

“A few Agnostic philosophers may be able to discover a number of subtle distinctions, which are imperceptible to ordinary men; but if the principles above referred to are to become the guides of the masses, one result must follow—the rupture of all existing moral obligations and social ties. The weaker must perish, and the stronger survive, under the iron chariot-wheels of Agnostic evolution. The sooner, therefore, that the stronger and more fully developed races of mankind improve the weaker ones off the face of the earth, the more speedy will be the arrival of that great millennium, for the advent of which the Agnostic philosopher is sighing, when, after the lapse of innumerable ages, man and his environment shall be adjusted in perfect harmony with each other.”

We return our best thanks to Mr. Row for this eloquent and logical paper. It is gratifying to know that the clergy are constantly producing successful defences of Christianity in its orthodox and conservative form, and some of them are marked by great originality, as, for example, a sermon preached recently at Cambridge by the Rev. W. Page Roberts, which meets some infidel objections in a novel way, displaying considerable acquaintance with human nature and the subtler forms of scepticism.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### SERMONS ON THE COLLECTS, EPISTLES, AND GOSPELS; AND ON THE SAINTS' DAYS AND OTHER FESTIVALS.

WHEN our Prayer Book is first looked into and studied, the attention is at once attracted by the large portion appropriated to the Sundays of the year, and to various Saints' Days, Fasts, and Festivals which are intermingled with them, all having the same form and arrangement of Collect, Epistle, and Gospel. A closer investigation of the structure of our Services will then bring into prominence a kindred fact, namely, that every day of the year, morning and evening prayer are intended to be performed, so that, if the plan of the Church is carried out, the Collects will be read twice a day from January to December. If Churchmen imbibed the spirit, and followed the plain teaching of the Prayer Book by attending Divine Service on all possible occasions, it is manifest that the sentiments, and even the phrases of the Collects, would be as familiar to them as household words. This being the case it can need no apology if the clergy preach often from these impressive devotional compositions, taking, in connection with them, more or less frequently, the teaching of the Epistles and Gospels. It is not, indeed, always the case that there is a visible harmony between the Collects and the portions of Scripture which follow them;

but a little careful study will often shew that there is a connection which does not always present itself, and thus a two-fold source of subjects for sermons is placed in the power of the preacher; the main sentiment of the Collect may be found in the wording of the Epistle or Gospel, or that sentiment may be found in numerous passages scattered all over the Bible.

In the theological literature of the Church of England will be found many excellent expositions and commentaries on these prominent portions of our Prayer Book; but we will now only select two as guides to our younger clergy. The first is that recently published by Dr. Goulburn, Dean of Norwich, with the following title: *The Collects of the Day; an Exposition, Critical and Devotional, of the Collects appointed at the Communion; with Preliminary Essays on their Structure, Sources, and General Character, and Appendices containing Expositions of the Discarded Collects of the first Prayer Book of 1549, and of the Collects of Morning and Evening Prayer.*

Before we had seen this valuable work we had been informed that a London clergyman had turned several of the chapters into sermons for the special edification of his congregation; and we recommend our readers, when they want some original subject, to follow this example. Not only can the doctrinal matter contained in the volume be used with advantage in the pulpit, but there is much that is archæological and historical which may be turned to the same good account. For example, the eighth chapter is devoted to the consideration of the Collects

by Archbishop Cranmer, and we find in it the following noble defence of the prelate, whom it is the fashion in some quarters to defame. We will make no apology for giving the whole of it:—

“As to the six recantations signed by the Archbishop in order to save his life, of which so much is made by his detractors, it should be remembered that the moral courage which gave way under the pressure of imprisonment and imminent death, had stood quite firm on an earlier occasion, and rallied again at the end. Nothing is more certain than that, when Mary came to the throne and began to rehabilitate the superstitions which had been swept away, Cranmer might have found safety in flight, but did not. He recommended others to leave the country, but would not accept their recommendation to do so himself. ‘It would be in no way fitting for him,’ he said, ‘to go away, considering the post in which he was; and to shew that he was afraid to own all the changes that were, by his means, made in religion in the last reign.’ And immediately after this, when the Mass was being everywhere restored, he put himself forward in a letter, which was very widely circulated, as ready to defend, against all opponents, the Reformed Communion Service. True, his courage gave way when severer pressure was put upon him. Cowed and crushed in his boyhood by the severity of a harsh schoolmaster, he had never been a man of strong or independent mind. He was of a sensitive organization, and of an amiable but yielding character, liable to be overborne physically by the prospect of bodily suffering, and to be morally



overborne by the consciousness that numbers and authorities of the day were arrayed against his opinions. But the principle which had led him to refuse to fly, rallied grandly at the last. Who shall refuse admiration to that act of thrusting into the flames first the right hand which had signed those recreant recantations? True, the Queen would not have saved his life, whatever he might have done—he had no option but the stake—but is there no such thing as martyrdom in will, though not in deed? The three Hebrew youths were martyrs in will, though not in deed, when they walked scathless in the midst of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace; and there is every evidence which the subject admits of, that the supreme moment, when it arrived to Cranmer, drew out the energies of his will, which had been overpowered by weary hours of uncertainty and anticipation; and that at the last, if he might have saved himself by recanting, he would not have done so. For the rest, how imbued with Christian principle was that address of his before his execution, in which he retracted his recantations! One of his dying exhortations was that—'You live all together, like brethren and sisters; for this you may be sure, that whosoever hateth his brother or sister, and goeth about maliciously to hinder or hurt him, surely, and without all doubt, God is not with that man, although he think himself never so much in God's favour.' What an illustration is afforded by this dying counsel of the good Archbishop, of the doctrine of one of his own Collects: 'O Lord, who has taught us that all our doings without charity

are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee: Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake.' ”

Works similar to this, but more extended in their theological range, have been published within the last few years by the Rev. W. Denton, Vicar of St. Bartholomew, Cripplegate. They are entitled as follows: *Commentary on Sunday and Saints' Day Gospels*, 3 vols.; *Commentary on the Sunday and Saints' Day Epistles*, 2 vols. We have been led to form a very high opinion of these works as aids to pulpit preparation; and if sermons are animated by their spirit, and imbued with their sentiments, they cannot fail to influence and benefit those who listen to them. Mr. Denton has so well described the nature and purpose of his volumes that we must allow him to state them in his own language. He informs his readers “that he has endeavoured to retrench every unnecessary word, so as to present the reader with the substance of many volumes within a moderate compass. It does not affect to be a plain commentary; it is not, perhaps, adapted to mean capacities; it does not promise to save the reader from the troublesome labour of thinking (and it is not specially applicable for family reading); rather, it is a selection from the ample storehouse of ancient times, such as, I trust, may be found *useful to divines and preachers of modern days*. It is borrowed from the writings of men who thought much, who prayed much, who

pondered much on these words of the Gospels, which are words, indeed, of truth and soberness; but also of much length and depth and height, and which pass the carnal notice of impatient man."

The Festivals and Fasts of our Church, with the Saints' Days which it has selected for commemoration, will necessarily have a large measure of the preacher's attention, not only from the great interest which they intrinsically possess, but also from the importance given to them by the space which they occupy in our Services. Nothing more tends to give our parishioners loose conceptions of the Church of England, and of her relations to the whole Catholic Church, than the habit of neglecting the Saints' Days, as though they were mere objects of antiquity, and not capable of being used by us as means of grace. A clergyman who passes by these commemorations of primitive zeal and piety, does a great deal to lower his Church in the estimation of its members, and to weaken the bonds which connect it with the past. And not only is this true, but the preacher loses the variety of topics which the Services of these days give to the Christian year, by thus neglecting them. The valuable works of Cave may be referred to as containing sufficient historical information respecting the saints of our calendar; and modern Church literature will supply more than sufficient of pious sentiments regarding the apostles and martyrs. A great deal of what has been handed down to us on these subjects must, it is true, be treated as more or less mythical. But even when thus viewed,

there is much which may be profitably used to round off the angularities and conventionalisms which are always gathering around the routine of our Church life. Those who have the opportunity of reading Montalambert's *Monks of the West*, will at once recognize our meaning, for the glowing descriptions given of the ancient British saints, by that most pleasing writer, cannot fail to awaken a measure of pious enthusiasm in the breast of the thoughtful pastor. Happy are those preachers who, while obeying the apostolic precept, "prove all things, hold fast that which is good," can open their hearts and minds to what is truly poetical in the associations which invite their attention on every side.

But the hagiology at the command of an English clergyman need not be confined to the saints of the calendar of our Church; indeed, it would be unreasonable, as well as injurious, to cut ourselves off in our preaching from all the great saints by which our history has been distinguished—we may, in fact, go further, and say from all the holy men who, by their pious labours and great abilities, were distinguished in all Christendom, whose names are not found in our Prayer Book. It will furnish a pleasing variety to our pulpit services if we sometimes illustrate our sermons by references to the great names which are revered in our own country, both before and after the Reformation; and as we attach considerable importance to this practice, we will give a plain illustration of what we mean. Let us suppose the text to be discussed is St. Matthew xiii. 45: "The

kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." The obvious intention of this brief parable, as well as that of "treasure hid in a field," in verse 44, is to point out the decision and earnestness with which the Gospel would be received by those who were to become its confessors and martyrs in all ages of the Church. It may then be shewn, as illustrative of the text, that St. Paul, on his conversion, acted exactly on this principle, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. St. Augustine may next be mentioned as acting in the same way, after his conversion; and then, to complete the chain to our own time, the late Bishop Milman, the devoted patriarch of British India.

These names are only cited by us as examples, which may be varied to any extent by the reading of the preacher, or by the labours and deaths of contemporary persons familiar to all our hearers; so that the text of St. Matthew may be adopted at any time during our ministry, and if so treated, will be sure to gain the attention of the congregation; and other texts may be successfully treated in the same manner. Nor need our attention be confined to the New Testament in the selection of topics to illustrate the parables in St. Matthew. The parable of the pearls may properly be considered retrospectively, and Shadrack and his companions, and Daniel be cited as examples.

Moses, also, who "esteemed the reproach of

Christ to be greater riches than the treasures of Egypt," is obviously appropriate, as is Elijah, who counted as nothing the threats of Ahab and the persuasions of Jezebel in his obedience to the will of Jehovah. We give these slight hints in the hope that they may prove fruitful in the hands of those for whom this volume is intended.

The Reformation in England is the grandest event of modern times to which the admiring attention of our clergy can be directed, and as it produced great and noble characters, they may properly be used occasionally as the Saints of our Calendar. We say this *pace* their recent revilers, who are painfully contrasted with Dean Goulburn, whose noble apology for Cranmer is before our readers. We will recommend the clergy, for the purposes of this chapter, to be moderately versed in the whole course of Church history, and especially to be familiar with that portion of it which concerns our own Church in modern times.

## CHAPTER XX.

### SERMONS TO ARTIZANS AND LABOURERS.

THE word Communism has in these days a very sinister sound, and the political state of things which it represents is still more ominous of evil. But every student of the New Testament must be fully aware that the Church of Christ, which is there represented, is essentially communistic. Our Lord and his Apostles, indeed, urge us to give tribute to Cæsar, "tribute to whom tribute is due," "custom to whom custom," and to "honour all men." But these commands stand side by side with declarations and practices which maintain that Christian men have equal rights and privileges, as members of a social citizenship, and are equal inheritors of "a better country, even a heavenly." The refined prudence of inspired men is shewn, indeed, by the way in which the sacred writers avoid direct allusion to the social and class evils of the times in which they lived. So that even war and slavery are not expressly denounced by them. Yet our Lord's severity against rich men, and his constant patronage of the indigent, the neglected, and the obscure, teach us in the strongest possible way that His kingdom, as it was to be set up in the world, would not endure the injustice which yet, from that day to this, has more or less existed side by side with it in all parts of the

world. We confess this is a subject of great difficulty, on which a prudent reserve must always be exercised by the Christian teacher, though nothing must make him neglect to maintain the grand principles contained in such passages as these:—"Jesus saith unto them, ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship upon them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many;" or the still stronger assertion of universal equality among the members of the Christian community claimed for them by St. Paul:—"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

When Christians met in each other's houses, and celebrated their holy mysteries in the Catacombs of Rome, there could have been no difficulty in their exhibiting a brotherhood and equality, which must have been broken into fragments when the Church was taken under the patronage of the Emperors in the early centuries. Yet a respect for the poor members of Christ's flock was maintained, at least, outwardly, for a considerable period; and we will not regard as disproving this assertion the



lively description of St. James, of the man with the "gold ring" honoured with a conspicuous place in the assembly, as contrasted with the poor brother in "vile raiment," who was told to sit at the rich man's footstool; for it is open to doubt whether the reference here is not to a Jewish synagogue. But the fact is remarkable that the Church did not encourage any prominent respect of persons during Divine Service, or deliver special orations to artizans and agricultural labourers all through the early and Middle Ages, for we know, by documentary evidence, that "pews" and "appropriated seats" were rare down to the times of our Reformation, the worshippers then standing promiscuously as they entered into the church, and kneeling on the stone pavement. But the period of the Reformation changed all this, and "pews" and "galleries" and "seats in the aisles" for the poor have lumbered up our old ecclesiastical edifices, and disfigured and hidden their architectural proportions from that day to the present, in which, however, a more primitive pattern is beginning to be followed.\*

In the Caroline and Hanoverian periods of English history no pains were spared to keep the poor in what was then thought their "proper place," that is, to grind down their wages and to teach them submission to all and everything which "their superiors" might ordain; and the large numbers of the smock-frocked classes which then filled the aisles of our churches, were well indoc-

\* Much valuable information on this subject may be found in the *History and Law of Church Seats or Pews*, by Alfred Heales, F.S.A., Proctor in Doctors' Commons. (London: Butterworths).

trinated in the precepts of passive obedience and non-resistance, and kindred dogmas by the clergy, from bishops down to the curates. We do not suggest that this was done from an unchristian feeling, but simply because it was the fashion of the day to presume that the happiness of a poor man was absolutely incompatible with his having a will of his own in any place but his own cottage, or his forming any independent opinion on political or social questions. But all this is now changed, and a popular feature of Church work is the delivery of sermons to workmen as a special class, and collecting them for that purpose in impressive numbers at Church Congresses and similar gatherings. We do not object to these special methods of instructing artizans and labourers in their Christian duties, but we must express a fear lest their right position in the Church of Christ should be lowered or ignored by it. We regard the churches of our land as being the places where the true nature of Christian communion is set forth, and where the exclusiveness which shews itself everywhere else in social and public life, is to be counteracted by the oneness and brotherhood established and enjoined by the Gospels of Christ. We trust, therefore, that our readers will agree with us in the opinion that the poor ought not to be singled out by our sermons as wanting special addresses, but should rather be allowed to mingle in our congregations with their masters and superiors in social position, as all placed in the same state of probation, taught by the same Gospel, and bound equally with all other men to the "rest which remaineth

for the people of God," that is, for all those who are faithful to the end of their earthly pilgrimage.

Occasions will, however, occur, and properly so, when workmen and agricultural labourers may receive special instruction, as, for instance, club feasts and meetings of friendly societies. This may be done without any appearance of invidiousness, and without giving offence. Indeed, occasions of this kind should rather be sought than avoided, for the clergy are specially called upon to guide the common mind on all great questions which at different periods may be earnestly discussed. If, for instance, in an agricultural parish the recruiting officer is known to be actively employed in enticing young men to go and fight the "Queen's battles, they must not be allowed to enter into the snare" without being made acquainted with the special perils which beset them; nor must combinations among workmen, founded on dangerous principles, be allowed to proceed without wise and kind admonitions being put forth by those whose bounden duty it is to drive away from their parishes all dangerous and strange doctrines. This is not the only occasion for ministerial fidelity rising above conventional opinions and prejudices, especially those which surround the warlike sentiments which have become almost indigenous to Englishmen. We are quite aware that any attempt to raise national opinions on this and kindred subjects to the higher level of the New Testament, will be represented by some as disloyal, an argument which we believe has hardened many clerical consciences, and deprived the Church of the greater part of its

influence in opposing the wars and invasions which have lately done dishonour to our country. If the position we occupy as ministers of Christ does not give us courage to teach the poorer classes that Christ's authority is greater than that of any temporal prince, and that war is in its very essence opposed to the laws of His kingdom, we are brought, indeed, by the principles of this world, into a very degraded position. In many portions of its past history the Church of Christ has stood between savage warriors, and pleaded for the exercise of the benign precepts of forgiveness of injuries and love to the souls of men. But for long ages Christendom has altogether reversed these noblest of all maxims, and the clergy have too often joined with the laity in honouring and rewarding those whose profession is bloodshed, more than those the weapons of whose warfare are not carnal, but "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, destroying vain imaginations, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Of what use can it possibly be for parish priests to tell their flocks to love their enemies, and do good to them that despitefully use them, while they, with all other classes of the community, do honour to the genius and spirit of war?

We hope it is not often the case that our brethren the clergy give any sanction to what is called "a church parade" on Sunday, and thus assist in inflaming the military ardour of apprentices and labourers with warlike music at the very time the church bells are ringing for Divine service.

We shall not be blamed for saying as much as this, when it is known that on one occasion we were interrupted in administering the Holy Communion by the somewhat rough music of a rifle-corps band returning from a neighbouring church.

We know that these sentiments will be unpalatable to many, but the hope has not yet forsaken us that the true courage of Christian principles will, by the Spirit of God, throw into the shade the mere animal combativeness which is the chief quality of the "warlike spirit." Happy is that preacher who, disdaining all compromise between Christ and Belial, is not afraid or ashamed to proclaim as the "beloved" disciple did, "That all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of God, but is of the world;" and who can succeed in making artizans and labourers believe and feel that he is the greatest hero who can subdue his own passions, and subject all personal pride and ambition to the obedience of Christ.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### SERMONS TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS.

ONE of the first things which will gain the attention of a parish priest in any new sphere of duty, is the condition, mental and moral, of the rising generation, especially that portion of it included under the somewhat elastic term of "children," which may generally be considered as taking in its range all young persons up to the age of fifteen. After that age families become more divided, especially in agricultural parishes, the girls being scattered in all directions as domestic servants and the boys acquiring a sort of independence as apprentices, and in agricultural pursuits. Our Church recognises our duty to the younger portion thus defined by the institution of Catechising, which, although in a great measure neglected or abolished, is still retained in many localities.

There is reason to conclude that the catechising enjoined upon us by the Prayer Book extends only to the teaching of the Church Catechism, though we believe it takes a more comprehensive range in the hands of many of the clergy. If we are right in this supposition it follows that the exercise which is ordered to be carried on in church was not intended to embrace the whole of Christian teaching as regards the young, but only that portion of it which concerns our ecclesiastical polity, or that measure

of practical and doctrinal teaching which should bring children within the precincts of the Church Catholic and keep them there. The Scriptural exhortations to train up our children in the way they should go, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, could only be formally and imperfectly complied with if all the instruction of our boys and girls on religious subjects were to be communicated within the aisles or around the desk of a parish church.

But in modern times, and up to our own, the whole of this subject has acquired a new character and larger proportions, and the Sunday school has intruded itself into almost every parish in the land as an extra-official institution, having no recognized ecclesiastical status, and yet exerting a vast influence of a mixed character all over the country. The Sunday school is to be distinguished from the Charity school as the terms are generally understood, the latter having, in most instances, a solid foundation, and being regulated more by authority and precise rule than the former. The difference between the two may be seen any Sunday in town and country parishes; the Charity school attracting attention by the neat prescribed costume of the girls and boys, their walking quietly to church, and their subjection to parochial authority when there, while a Sunday school too often obtrudes itself on the spectator by a want of order and a resistance to method and discipline, both in church and out of it. The recent Centenary of Sunday schools, observed more or less all through the land, has called renewed attention to the whole subject, and

we hope something really valuable and influential, as regards the future, will be the result of all that has been said and written upon it. We are obliged to confess, as the result of the observation and experience of years, that we cannot be enthusiastic on the Sunday school question, the conviction we have arrived at being that while all instruction on Sundays, by whoever conducted, must do a certain amount of good and therefore must not be discouraged, the evils incidental to the present irregular and unauthorized system are great and call for the attention of our Church rulers. The recent discussion of this subject at the Carlisle Conference (1880) gave a fair view of its present position in our Church, and may be read with profit by all the parochial clergy.

The present age has witnessed a new religious phenomenon in reference to the treatment of children on Sundays in connection with the Church; Sermons to Children, in some places, being regularly delivered in separate buildings, either while the Service in the church is going on, or on parts of the day when the church is closed. The remarks we have already made on the class instruction of artisans and labourers will, in a great degree, apply to the present topic, for the unity of the Church cannot be regarded in its perfectness unless all the members of our families, as well as all those of social and public life, are included in it. The question which arises, when the propriety of having separate services for children is discussed, is really this:—Do the ordinary Services of a parish church, morning and evening, sufficiently meet the



demands of children and young persons, or do they not ; and if they do not, how can the deficiency be supplied ? It is not necessary for us here to decide this question, or to consider the subject more practically ; but of one thing we are sure—that the rule and control of parents over the members of their families ought never to be relaxed, and that if Sunday schools and Sunday sermons to children tend to this relaxation, they must, in the end, do more harm than good. A child cannot well be trained up in the way it should go, unless it is led to look up to its parents as its chief religious guides ; and unless, from the teaching at the mother's knee, it advances to the training it gets from sitting by the parents' side in church.

Our own opinion is that the pulpit in the Church, if properly used, can be made to afford all the religious teaching which is necessary for young persons, if the preacher recognizes their presence and their wants ; and almost any sermon will allow of as much personal application to them as to other classes of the parishioners. But this cannot be the case if children are made to sit by themselves in corners, or in side aisles, where they can be “put out of the way,” and carry on their little peccadilloes without attracting notice. Children in church should sit with their parents, a primitive and natural custom which has been greatly superseded by Sunday schools, and which separate services for them would discourage.\* It is well known that

\* When the parish church of the present writer was restored a few years back, a circumstance occurred which illustrates the way in which novelties have been introduced into our Services, and

the chief motive with some of the poor for sending their children to the Sunday school is getting them out of the way ; and, in many localities, the father may be seen smoking his pipe and lolling in his garden during church hours, while he devolves all the responsibility for the piety of his young family upon, probably, not very competent Sunday school teachers. The argument so often used, that parents will not take their children to church, and that therefore they must be looked after by others, will hardly bear examining. Certain it is that if one-tenth part of the money, the mental exertion, and the social influence which are now employed to fill the Sunday school were given to open the eyes of parents to their duty, and induce them to sit in the same seats at church with their families, the aspect of religious life among the poorer classes would soon be raised above its present level ; but, to gain this object, our churches must be unappropriated and entirely free. We have elsewhere written on the occasional practices of extempore speaking which should be embraced by a clergyman who wishes to excel in the art of extempore preaching. Occasions of this kind will be presented frequently by most

continued by custom alone, may come to be considered as integral parts of our Church system. The parish clerk, who had for a long life placed himself at the side of the parson, doing most of the responding by himself, seeing no place in the new arrangement for the continuance of his office, asked, with much concern, Where his place was to be ? and was very naturally disconcerted when told that no special place would be needed, and he could sit where he pleased, as one of the congregation. Another person anxiously asked the question, Where are the school children to sit ? and received for answer, they will sit with their parents.

sermons, though we fear that the course would be too novel to be often adopted—we mean the addressing children and young persons, parenthetically as it were, for a minute or two, at that part of the sermon which might seem specially adapted for their use. This, with addresses to them at school feasts and other appropriate opportunities, would give, we think, all the public special instruction required by this interesting class.

We may be allowed to remind the clergy that they all have numerous opportunities of delivering to the children of their parishes what we may call *lay* sermons, by which we mean the words of kindness and advice which may be directed to them at any time during the week, when at home, when met with in the street or the fields, or when in the day-school. If the children see that we are interested in their play, or in their reading, or their daily toil, they will feel pleased and honoured by the fact, and their hearts and minds will thus be prepared to receive willingly our more formal and official instruction.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### OCCASIONAL SERMONS.

OUR previous chapters have now gone over a large area, from which the clergy may easily select subjects for their pulpit ministrations; but it is not yet exhausted. There are numerous topics of general and of local interest which, in the course of a year, will come under the notice of an incumbent and demand a little discussion between himself and the churchwardens. The two missionary societies of the Church will come first,—or we may more properly say three, for “The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge” is often, in a very efficient sense, a missionary society; and it has the same semi-connection with two others, “The Pastoral Aid Society” and “The Society for the Employment of Additional Curates.” All these will, in the course of a year, prefer their claims to be heard and to appeal to the congregations for a portion of their available contributions. It would be a subject for congratulation if all these institutions could have one Sunday in the year appropriated to each of them, not only on account of the solid demands they could make on the purses of our people, but also of the assistance given to the clergy by the introduction of good subjects for sermons,—not to mention the fact that they could often secure Sunday assistance from their recognized advocates.

But, besides these established dependents on the generosity of our parishes, there are many others which make annual appeals for a hearing and a collection, and would probably get both, if there were not insurmountable objections to their being attended to. Perhaps there are few instances of parishes whose pulpits have been used for more than five or six collections in a year for extraneous objects ; and all the societies we have mentioned would think themselves highly privileged if they could secure to themselves one such annual collection in all English parishes.

But the abolition of church-rates has placed a very resolute veto on our ability to entertain the claims of Church societies for pecuniary assistance. In the old time, when a rate for church expenses was always to be obtained, those expenses were quite separate from the money collected in church for various public objects, and the two did not then clash together. But the case is quite different now, for the parishioners are now made to feel that they must give first of all, either by offertories in church, or by collections at the doors, for all those purposes for which the rate was formerly available ; and the result is that the money which then was readily obtained for foreign purposes has now to be applied, in the first instance, to meet the varied expenses of Divine Service. This difficulty does not exist so much in cases where the churchwardens set on foot subscription lists for their own special objects ; but it is more usual, we believe, for the whole congregation to contribute at the weekly offertory, and in this way those who would plead in our pulpits for

Church objects, are told in effect that no room can be found for them, or, in other words, that charity must begin at home.

But in spite of these obstacles a warm-hearted parson, who knows he has a generous people to deal with, will, in the course of a year, preach sermons more or less frequently for missionary societies, or for the Diocesan Fund, or the incidental objects which are sure to be brought before him for his assistance. Whether such occasions will be welcomed as pulpit helps, or regarded as unpleasant visitants, will depend upon the preacher's readiness of mind and utterance, or his power to adapt himself quickly to novel subjects. This question will shape itself into some practical form, either for or against a generous recognition of the claims we are speaking of, very early in clerical experience, and we would recommend a young vicar or rector to do all he can to take advantage of such means for exercising himself in extempore speaking, or, at all events, in a ready adaptation of his intellectual means to unwonted subjects, and suitable texts for these purposes will always present themselves in abundance. In another chapter we have urged the great assistance to be derived in the art of extempore preaching from incidental opportunities of a minor kind, such as those we are now speaking of, for public meetings for religious societies generally follow the sermons; and a young clergyman who is willing to speak at such meetings will thereby cultivate his powers for sermon delivery, while he will acquire, at the same time, the good-will of his parishioners and his neighbours. We have known

instances of excellent clergymen who have well discharged all the functions of parish priests, and yet been unable to say anything at a public meeting, and even to stumble considerably at such a simple thing as presenting a report of proceedings. This is not at all a desirable position to be placed in, and our main design in this chapter is to assist our brethren in avoiding it.

But gaining assistance to the funds of religious societies is not the only, nor, indeed, the main purpose for which these sermons should be preached. The primitive Churches, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, met together to listen to the good news of the success of missions established among the heathen, and this object alone should be, among ourselves, a sufficient justification for the delivery of sermons which should exhibit the progress of Christianity in the colonies or in heathen lands; and also to make known anything favourable or pleasing at home, such as the building of new churches, the formation of new parishes, or the revival of religion in parts of the country which may have been neglected. All this is really quite separate from the question of money, and we can see no reason why the conveyance of this intelligence, with the reflections arising from it, should not be considered as part of a preacher's duty, without having an indissoluble connection with collections of money. The edification of our flocks is our primary duty, and nothing can tend more to this than the mingling with the often dry and worn-out conventionalisms of our sermons, the records of what God is doing at home and abroad

for the accomplishment of the number of His elect and the hastening of His kingdom. We can conceive of no better purpose to which a parish priest can apply himself than that of taking up public events relating to the Gospel and the Church, and uniting them with the ordinary materials of his sermons.

Before we leave this chapter we must allude to sermons on the Holy Communion, and the making them an important part for the preacher's occasional duty. There is something most painful to a thoughtful and zealous Churchman in the way in which the Holy Communion is treated by the great majority who profess to take the Prayer Book as their guide, and are associated with him, year after year, in the ordinary Services of the parish Church, many of whom, through a long life, have never once attended Holy Communion, while others give to it only a very rare and fitful observance. And yet our bishops often make the number of communicants a crucial test of a prosperous or a declining and backsliding parish, whereas the fact is too well known to need being pointed out that many regular communicants are far from being the most excellent of the earth, or of the community to which they belong; while many, who never attend at all, are all that a thoughtful pastor could wish, except in this one particular. This state of things should certainly occupy the grave consideration of the pastor, and, if he really wishes to do so he will not find it very difficult to discover the causes of the conspicuous neglect of this Holy Sacrament. This is not the



place for us to dwell at length on this painful subject. A great deal of what is really superstitious is traditionally associated with the Lord's Supper, even by Low Churchmen and Nonconformists, and the wording of our Service is, in some instances, a stumbling-block to pious souls who, but for it would obey their Lord's command. The use of the word *damnation*, as the improper rendering of St. Paul's *κρίμα*, *condemnation*, has a fearful amount of evil to answer for; and all sensible persons must marvel why this incorrect translation is perpetuated. But there are other objectionable passages in the Exhortations, but as we believe they are not now generally read, we need not criticize them. Still, the devout worshipper has the Prayer Book in his hands and at his home, and the impression which has always been made upon him can only be effaced by the judicious explanation of the authorized teacher. Sermons on the Lord's Supper should often be preached, considering it not only in its devotional aspect, but with a reference to the prejudices and objections which the preacher knows are entertained among his parishioners. There is much that is exegetical and historical, which ought to be set before our people as opportunities may occur.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### COTTAGE SERMONS OR LECTURES.

PERHAPS the very best exercise in extempore speaking will be furnished to the young parish priest by occasional short services in the homes of the poor, for which convenient opportunities may always be easily found. In most parishes there are alms-houses whose inmates will always be glad to come together to listen to the Bible-reading and prayers of their minister ; or, if no such convenient place exists, the largest available room in a locality can readily be secured for the purpose, and a considerable number of aged and infirm persons can thus be got together. With the Bible in his hand or on his knees, the pastor can discourse *ad libitum* on any portion he may select, and expound a little, verse by verse, as he proceeds. Very little previous preparation will be necessary for this ; but he may make the service more pleasing to his hearers, and more useful to himself, by sometimes "taking a text," without which inseparable adjunct of a sermon the good people of Old England do not think they are professionally treated by those who publicly instruct them. It is obvious that one who is bent on acquiring experience and success in extempore speaking will find the course we now recommend highly useful to him. The homily may be shorter or longer, as occasion serves ; may

be aided by notes, or carried through without them; and there will be none of those painful failures which are apt to discourage such discursiveness when the experiment is made before a congregation.

It may be necessary in this place to guard the young clergyman against an abuse of cottage lectures, which is sometimes likely to occur. To common and ignorant minds preaching in the room of a dwelling-house has an attraction which the parish church does not possess, and such a room will be frequented by poor persons who will not give their time to the daily prayers in the parish church; so that while seemingly zealous for the service of God, they are, in fact, neglecting it in its higher performance. Such is human frailty that things good in themselves can seldom be set on foot without some allied abuse springing out of them. The charm of novelty is taken advantage of to a great extent in the various systems of Nonconformity, but it should be carefully watched and used with great caution in the Church of England.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### OBITUARY, OR FUNERAL SERMONS.

THE custom of addressing the living on the occasion of the death and burial of a friend or relative is probably as old as the ravages of death itself, and we may be sure that our mother Eve uttered some eloquent and natural sentiments when she assisted in placing Abel in the first grave which was opened. But we must make a distinction between funeral sermons and orations, the latter being speeches at the sepulture, not of relatives, but of fellow-citizens who have been more or less distinguished for their conduct in life. It will not be incorrect, perhaps, to say that the two are combined in the beautiful elegy of David on the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, though we are ignorant as to whether that was pronounced at the grave or the tomb. Many funeral sermons, under the Christian dispensation, have effectively taken partly the character of orations, as our readers will remember is the case with the *Oraisons Funébres* of Bossuet, whose splendid genius could at once touch the hearts of mourning relatives and the various classes of the large audiences whom he addressed.

Custom has differed greatly on the subject of funeral sermons, but our knowledge or our memory fails as to the variations of time and manner, except in our own age, which will be as familiar to our

readers as to ourselves. The Puritans dealt much in funeral sermons, wisely and properly thinking that the deaths of their parishioners furnished the best possible occasions for touching the hearts and consciences of the living; and the same feeling pervades all Nonconforming communities of the present day, when death removes from them those who are practically regarded as "members" of their body, as distinguished from the congregation, or those whom *we* designate "communicants." We are happy in thinking that this distinction, though often founded in truth, is not common among ourselves, for it would be extremely invidious for us to let our parishioners know that a constant communicant was regarded by us as being a more appropriate subject for a eulogy after death than one who but seldom attended Holy Communion. But there are other social divisions, far more effective than this, in regard to funeral sermons. The positions of wealth, and what is known by the comprehensive term of "respectability," pointing out, as a rule, more definitely than anything else the deceased who ought to have a funeral sermon. Many of our old churches, during the last two centuries, were provided with a peg or hook at the back of the pulpit, on which the hat of the preacher, adorned with a "silk band" of great length, was hung during the service, the parson at the same time wearing "black gloves." In the course of a long ministry we have observed, more than once, in hot summer weather, the pages of the Service books disfigured with the purple stains of these gloves. We believe that in most cases among Dissenters

these "hat bands and gloves" were produced the more freely because they so often preceded funeral sermons. As clergymen are but men, and, in most cases, have domestic wants, participated in by the *mater-familias*, it must sometimes be a source of slight disappointment when these often handsome presents are withheld by the funeral reforms which modern tastes are now introducing. But we are perfectly sure that most of the clergy would far rather be without them than join in fostering the class prejudices and customs which they indicate. The good sense of a preacher, as well as his better feelings, will sufficiently point out to him the proper occasions for funeral sermons. Sudden deaths; the deaths of those who have been more than usually afflicted by previous sickness; the decease of young persons, especially when just entering on that interesting stage when the responsibilities of life are beginning,—are only samples of what will occur to every one as occasions of special notice. But, besides these, occasions of a more public or official character will often occur, when it will appear to our parishioners that it is not favoritism or respect of persons to preach a funeral sermon for the dead. When such opportunities present themselves they ought to be seriously embraced, as furnishing unusual facilities for bringing religious instruction home to the minds and hearts of the living. References to what are called the experiences of deceased persons are not common in our Church, nor is it desirable they should be; yet it would be mere affectation always to avoid them. When piety and Christian benevolence have been

unusually conspicuous in our parishioners, we shall only be following the example of Holy Scripture, and the practice of the Church in all ages, by calling to them the attention of the living. "Devout men followed Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him" (Acts viii. 2); and all the widows stood by him (Peter) weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them" (Acts ix. 39).

Among the funeral customs which seem to have been invented for the purpose of destroying seriousness, we must mention that of the clergyman going to the home of the deceased, and, after being offered refreshment there, following in a procession to the grave. In some cases he was introduced to the relatives sitting together in a body, and he had then the opportunity of comforting "the mourners," and dropping a word or two of reflection and advice. But in some parts of the country this introduction does not take place, but the clergyman is put in a room, in the centre of which is the coffin, where he meets the other members of the official *cortége*—that is, the doctor, the coffin-maker, and the linen-draper. These, with himself, after more or less time allowed for desultory conversation, join the procession to the grave, either in a coach or on foot, and, after the service, return to the house in the same way. A clergyman should always decline in taking a part in these processions and home-gatherings, and we believe he may always do so without giving offence. We notice these funeral customs entirely in relation to the minister of religion, who is expected to take a part in them, for we think it is

scarcely possible to arrange and preach a suitable funeral sermon with all these worldly associations fresh in his memory. But we hope all these old conventionalisms are giving way, under the hands of those Christian men who are using their efforts to bring about "funeral reform."

But all extremes are to be avoided, and this salutary reform may, in some of its regulations, be carried too far. Whatever in the old or the present system has been found to contribute to the comfort and edification of survivors should be retained; and however strongly the clergyman may feel opposed to the customs of his parish, the alterations he would make himself should be recommended with caution. If ever expediency in religious matters is permissible, it must be when the hearts of relatives are smitten by the hand of God's providence; and if we see that in such circumstances a funeral sermon will alleviate the sorrows of relatives, we should not make very strong objections to preaching one.



## CHAPTER XXV.

### ORIGINAL AND BORROWED SERMONS.

WE can readily imagine that a young clergyman who has honoured us so far as to have read attentively what has been already advanced, may now pause and begin to gauge his own powers of carrying out our theories into practice. He has, perhaps, up to the present period of his ministry, written some of his sermons entirely, copied others out from the stock of written sermons at his command, read some of them altogether from the pulpit, and used a mixed method with regard to others; and we hope it is not unlikely that, in a few instances, a purely extemporaneous method may have been boldly attempted. But we think we may safely declare that the result of all this experimenting will be a conviction, on the part of the tyro, that however much he may succeed in weaving materials of his discourses out of his own brain, he must be dependent in a great measure on the mental fertility of others; and that, at present, he has much hard work to accomplish before he can have the happy freedom which we have already described as the privilege of a competent extemporaneous preacher.

If a clergyman in the position we have now indicated, whether young in the profession or more or less advanced in it, were to give us his confidence

and ask our advice at this anxious and critical period, we should feel it our pleasant duty to give him encouragement. We should advise him honestly and fearlessly to survey the whole field of sermon literature, and to draw upon it for whatever he may want to enable him, Sunday after Sunday, to lay before his congregation what he has prayerfully and conscientiously taken from these stores for their spiritual benefit. Some of our readers may be surprised at this decided sanction given by us to the use of borrowed sermons, since, in a former part of this volume, we have strongly condemned the trade in sermons ; but though we are ready to defend what we have there advanced, we must remind our readers that, in numerous other places we have sanctioned and advised a legitimate use of whatever wisdom and piety our forefathers and contemporaries have provided for our aid in the services of the pulpit. If we thought it could be made profitable we could utter a good deal of strong condemnation of both the retailers and purchasers of manuscript, lithographed, and printed sermons, manufactured and issued in such a form as to insinuate, to say the least, that they are the preacher's own production ; but we think that the demerits of the trade are too obvious to need a more extended criticism, and we will leave the subject to die that natural death which will be its ultimate fate if our Lectures on the Art of Preaching are only moderately successful.

It would be curious to enquire at what period of the Church's history it became a matter of doubt whether a preacher of the Divine Word was in any

way reprehensible in using as his own, portions of the theological and homiletical literary stores of the Universal Church. But we do not believe the question would ever have arisen simply on its own merits, but are inclined to think that any invidious distinction between the original and the borrowed could only have come into existence when preachers, from various motives, concealed the fact of their dependence upon the thoughts of others, or when the subject of *meum et tuum* first entered the arena of pulpit discussion on the part of either preachers or congregations. Ever since the teaching of the Church availed itself of written documents for the instruction of the people, that is, ever since what were known as the Scriptures were employed in public teaching, the sufficiency of a recognized stock of literary matter for that purpose must have been quietly acquiesced in, and preaching would then be nothing more than a simple reading of matter intended to instruct the understanding and improve the heart, mingled or conjoined with some personal extemporised address, as we learn to have been the custom in the Jewish synagogue, and which is illustrated by our Lord himself, as we find recorded in St. Luke iv. But as time rolled on, and social and public life developed more cultivation and a greater variety of interests, more technical matters intruded themselves, and the greater or less fitness of different men to move and instruct others, was recognized and discussed. Nature, or rather the providence of God, manifested its own laws in this as in every thing else, and selections could soon be made of the better or the inferior in human discourses,

prayers, or public and formal addresses. 'Aaron was designated for his office of messenger to the Court of Pharoah by his possessing the gift of speech in a greater degree than Moses; James and John were called Boanerges, or the sons of thunder, in distinction from the other Apostles, for a similar reason; and the Greeks at Lystra were attracted by the superior eloquence of St. Paul over Barnabas, and called the former Mercurius, "because he was the chief speaker." So, in the early Church, St. Chrysostom acquired the name of the "Golden-mouthed" because of the eloquence of his preaching; and St. Augustine, in the Latin Church, drew to himself the attention of his age for the same reason.

All this seems natural enough, and if we ask why, among ourselves, there should be anything reprehensible or dishonourable in a preacher using the sermons of others, it can only be, we think, because it is done covertly, or because there appears to be an intention to palm off what is thus used as the preacher's own. This feeling would be increased in proportion as preaching became more popular, and sermons were criticised as good, bad, or indifferent. A plain, ordinary discourse might be suspected not to be the preacher's own, but this would not be thought a subject for blame; but if it should be eloquent or pungent, or in any other way remarkable, the appropriator of it would be thought dishonest and get discredited accordingly. Now the way to prevent all this would simply be for a preacher to act openly and let it be known, after giving out his text, that what he was about to give the audience was not his own, and either giving the

real name of the author, or leaving it to be considered anonymous. If this plan were to be adopted all suspicion and blame would be obviated, and the preacher of other men's sermons would, we believe, become a popular character. Who could find fault, if the sermon were a good one, on being told that it was one of St. Chrysostom's homilies, or that it had been preached the week before by one of the select preachers of the University of Cambridge?

That the plan of purchasing sermons of those who advertise them for all occasions is felt to be in some degree dishonourable, appears plainly from the care taken to make such productions seem to be the preacher's own. They are written on paper of a particular kind, known as sermon paper; or, if not written, lithographed to appear as handwriting, so that quick eyes in the congregation may be led to regard them as executed by the preacher. There is something in all this which savours of an improper concealment, and of a purpose to use the production of another as one's own, and the general openness and honesty of average Englishmen is offended and even disgusted by the proceeding. Secrecy is promised by the vendors of such surreptitious wares, and pains are taken, as far as possible, to prevent the same discourse appearing twice within the limited space or period,—for it would occasion no small stir in a neighbourhood if gossips were able to state that the same sermon, from the same text, had been delivered by two different clergymen within the area of two or three parishes.

Some awkward discoveries of this kind have been recorded, and may be found in the literary gossip respecting the clergy and the pulpit. The following came within our own observation, and our account of it shall be literally correct. A young Wesleyan minister, forty years ago, on leaving the circuit he had occupied for another, preached so impressive a discourse that he was urged by his hearers to print it. His vanity not yielding to his discretion, he did so, and a week or two afterwards it was known that the printed sermon was to be found in a volume published by the Reverend Mr. Jay, a popular Independent minister of Bath. This incident proved that the Wesleyan minister had an excellent memory and was a good extemporaneous preacher, for the single sermon purchased and circulated by his admirers was almost an exact transcript of the one before published by Mr. Jay. This proved a great mortification to Wesleyan society, but instead of accepting the inevitable and passing over the incident as of little importance, an influential member of the body declared his conviction that the identity of the two productions was the result of a double inspiration of God.

How happy we should be if we could induce the whole body of the clergy to get rid, for ever, of these petty scandals by determining, boldly and ingenuously, to proclaim the source of their discourses when they are not their own ; they would then often give pleasure to their hearers, while at the same time they left the pulpit without the slightest reflection upon their honour. It would greatly facilitate such a happy consummation if a

few clergymen of known pulpit abilities were occasionally to adopt this plan, and state their object in doing so. In a few years this honest and open conduct would give courage to inferior men, and the using of the sermon of another would be regarded as perfectly legitimate and a matter of course.

While we have felt it right to free the question of borrowed sermons from the strong prejudice arising from the sale of manuscript sermons, we should be sorry if anything we have said should tend to foster that indisposition or inability to compose their own sermons which, it is evident, so many of the clergy feel. Two really good and instructive sermons for every Sunday in the year may easily be selected from a moderately-stocked clerical library, or from current sermon literature, and the parish priest who did this discreetly and openly might be very popular with his congregation. But this is only one aspect of the subject, and there are higher considerations which must not be thrown into the shade. A man who writes his own sermons—according to the ability which God gives him, in humble dependence on Divine aid—must come into closer contact with those to whom he preaches it, than can be the case when he takes all his materials from others. The invisible and subtle mental and spiritual influences which, by a kind of magnetism, go from mind to mind and from heart to heart, are not to be disregarded; and the thoughts which have been carefully elaborated in the study are sure to come home to the hearers with greater effect when delivered as the preacher's

own than when they are recognised as those of another, not conceived by him *pro re natâ*, but adopted for personal convenience from the writings of others. May the time be far distant from us when the spiritual warmth and energy which we believe now animate the great majority of our clergy in their carefully prepared pulpit addresses, shall be exchanged for the cold, mercantile process of taking into the pulpit, whether confessed or concealed, the production of another man, though that man may be a father of the ancient Church or an eloquent orator of our own age.

It would, however, be a great injustice to the sermon-sellers and buyers, to whom we profess no attachment, to lay all the blame on them for practices which have caused considerable scandal to good men and to society at large, for many persons of undoubted piety and the very best motives have aided in forming the objectionable practice; and it is a remarkable fact that pious Evangelical clergymen have been the greatest offenders in this way. We will say nothing, at present, of the host of volumes of sermons and skeletons of sermons which have been published by preachers of ability with the avowed design of helping their brethren, and come at once to the name and labours of the divine who has outrun all his competitors in this intellectual labour; we refer, of course, to the Rev. Charles Simeon, whose gigantic and far-famed collection of sermons and sketches of sermons is thus commemorated in that most useful work, *The Cyclopædia Bibliographica*, by James Darling:—

“Charles Simeon, M.A., a pious and eminent



divine : born at Reading, 1759 ; educated at Eton and at King's College, Cambridge. Presented to the living of Trinity Church, Cambridge, 1783, which he held until his death, 1836. *Horæ Homileticæ* ; or, Discourses digested into one continued series, and forming a Commentary upon every Book of the Old and New Testament ; with Claude's Essay on the Composition of a Sermon. 21 vols. 8vo. London : 1840. This publication includes the entire works of the author. The sermons published separately will be found in it under their several texts. The last volume contains indexes : " Of Matters Liturgical ; Of Subjects adapted to Sermons on particular occasions," etc.

The large Evangelical party to which Mr. Simeon belonged will, no doubt, justify this zealous labour performed by a divine whom many of them regard as endowed with a minor kind of inspiration ; but we must not allow ourselves to put out of sight the great evils which such a work as this sanctioned and perpetuated. We cannot regard, without alarm, the mental bondage in which Mr. Simeon's vast labours must have held thousands of his brethren, from the date of the publication of what was intended to help them. A free searching of Holy Scripture and the habit of proving all things, to which we are exhorted by St. Paul, can hardly have place in a man who has cumbered his library by such a work as this, if used, as it is intended to be, to tell him what to say every time he ascends the pulpit.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE HOMILIES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE homilies sanctioned by the Reformed Church are not very suggestive on the general subject of the last chapter, but the name and the compositions it designates are so to a great degree. Our homilies proceed on the presumption that the sermons of other men may be used by the clergy, on the understanding that their authors are responsible persons, and that what they supply is sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority. The subject of homilies generally, as used in the Church from the earliest period, is extremely interesting, and as it is little known we will say something upon it in this connection. Under the head of Homiletics we find the following summary in *Chambers' Encyclopædia*:—“Homiletics, that particular branch of sacred rhetoric which regards the composition of the familiar discourses known under the name of homily. The earliest writer on the subject of homiletics is St. Augustine, whose book, *De Doctrinâ Christianâ*, is in some sense an adaptation of profane rhetoric to sacred uses. Rabanus, Maurus, and Isidore of Seville also incidentally treat the subject; but the nearest approach to a systematic treatment of it in mediæval literature is to be found in Hunibert, *De Eruditione Concionatorum*. St. Carlo Borromeo's *Instruktionen Pastorum* was a part of his general

scheme for the improvement of clerical education, and in the ecclesiastical course, as well of Catholics as of Protestants, homiletics occupies an important place. The bare enumeration of the works of Schott, Marheineke, Theremin, Sailer, Gishert, Brand, Laberenz, may shew the importance which is attached in both Churches to this branch of sacred science."

"Homiliaria, or collections of homilies for the use of pastors, were in use from a very early period. Mabillon mentions a very ancient Gallican homiliarium (*De Lit. Gallican*). The fifty homilies of Venerable Bede, too, were in familiar use among the clergy in all parts of the West, and we find in the letters of the mediæval time, traces of a busy interchange of sermons, original or otherwise, between bishops and clergy, even in distant countries. The supply, however, was imperfect and scanty, and one of the many reformatory measures of Charlemagne was a compilation of homilies under the title of Homiliarium, which was made, under his direction, by the deacon, Paul Warnefried. It was compiled in the end of the eighth century, and contains homilies for all the Sundays and festivals of the year. Many Synods of that and subsequent periods directed the clergy to translate these sermons for their flocks, and the collection continued in use for this purpose down to the sixteenth century. It was printed at Speyer, in 1482, and again at Cologne, in 1557. A collection of homilies is also ascribed to Alcuin, but it seems more likely to have been but a modification of the Homiliarium of Warnefried."

Are we incorrect in saying that these short extracts contain abundant suggestions for those who may contemplate and carry forward the reform of our Church in reference to clerical education and the duties of the pulpit?

There is so little that is satisfactory connected with the Homilies of our Church set forth and ordered to be preached in the sixteenth century, that we have felt almost disposed to pass them by without special notice; but, on reflection, we think it would be ungracious, and, perhaps, undutiful on our part to neglect what was thought so highly of by our rulers at the time of the Reformation, and has the express sanction of our Church up to the present time in the Prayer Book and Articles. It might further appear strange that—after writing a considerable volume on the pulpit necessities of the clergy, and on the difficulties in the way of their being fully supplied—we should say nothing about the small collection of sermons which the clergy are not only permitted, but commanded to read from their pulpits, not once only, but again and again, as long as they have the cure of souls. It is probable that few of our brethren are aware of the existence of the following rule contained in the Preface to the Homilies published in the reign of Elizabeth, and we will therefore give it here:—

“All which Homilies her Majesty commandeth and straitly chargeth all parsons, vicars, curates, and all others having spiritual cure, every Sunday and Holy day in the year, at the ministering of the Holy Communion, or if there be no Communion ministered that day, yet after the Gospel and Creed,

in such order and place as is appointed in the Book of Common Prayers, to read and declare to their parishioners plainly and distinctly one of the said Homilies, in such order as they stand in the book, except there be a sermon, according as it is enjoined in the book of her Highness's Injunctions; and then for that cause only, and for none other, the reading of the said Homily to be deferred unto the next Sunday or Holy day following, and when the aforesaid Book of Homilies is read over, her Majesty's pleasure is that the same be repeated and read again, in such like sort as was before prescribed."

Those must indeed have been dark times when the clergy of one of the largest churches in Christendom were required to take patiently the "bit and bridle" of authority within their lips, and to deliver to their congregations what was thus arbitrarily imposed upon them. And yet it becomes us to be modest in our criticism, for have we not complained in this volume of clerical ignorance and inefficiency which leads sermons to become marketable commodities, and of underhand schemes to hide the contraband goods from the people, and make it appear that they are the preacher's own—the result of his intellectual and pious invention? Nor is this the only fact which should make us charitable to "Queen Elizabeth of famous memory" and her erudite counsellors, for it is well known that, in some parishes, those who pry into such matters, while sitting in their pews, can tell almost to a certainty what text their minister will take on any Sunday in the month or year, from which it is con-

cluded that he has a certain number of homilies in a box to last for a certain time, and then to be used over again. Still, after we have given all their true value to all these not very creditable curiosities of pulpit life, the contrast between Queen Elizabeth's days and our own is such as to fill us with gratitude for our vastly superior advantages. We must, however, express our wonder that—in the great difficulties of providing pulpit discourses that some of the clergy appear to experience—the homilies are not often resorted to.

If the method of viewing the subject of providing sermons which we have put forth in a former chapter were to become common, we can see no reason whatever why all our homilies should not be regarded as legitimate means of pulpit instruction. Their matter is generally unexceptionable, and their language, with a few allowable alterations, could not be seriously blamed by modern congregations. We admit, frankly, for our own part, that we should not have the slightest objection to taking the volume of homilies into the pulpit and reading one of them, taking the opportunity, at the same time, of throwing any historical or theological light upon it which our own resources might supply. We believe such a plan would be popular, and if one such homily were read once a quarter considerable assistance would be given to the clergy, and probably none would complain.

In case any of our readers should feel disposed to follow our advice, and to read these homilies, commenting upon them here and there, we will give a quotation from Burnet which will shew what

kind of materials are at their service :—"Two things only remained to be done at present. The one was to draw up some homilies for the instruction of the people, which might supply the defects of the incumbents, together with the providing with such books as might lead them into the understanding of the Scripture. . . . Therefore some were appointed to compile these homilies, and twelve were at first agreed on, being about those arguments which were in themselves of the greatest importance. The first was about the Use of the Scriptures . . . . The chief design of them was to acquaint the people with the method of salvation according to the Gospel, in which there were two dangerous extremes at that time that had divided the world. The greatest part of the ignorant commons seemed to consider their priests as a sort of people who had such a secret trick of saving their souls, as mountebanks pretend in the curing of diseases, and that there was nothing to be done but to leave themselves in their hands and the business could not miscarry. The other extreme was of some corrupt Gospellers who thought, if they magnified Christ much and depended on His merits and intercession, they could not perish which way soever they led their lives. In these homilies, therefore, special care was taken to rectify these errors."

We will give another quotation, from a treatise of our own, in which the Bible knowledge of the common people at the period of the Reformation is discussed :—"It is almost difficult to realise the immense contrast between the authoritative teaching of the people received at the close of the reign of

Henry, and that given them in these homilies at the commencement of that of Edward—men being persecuted unto death, in the former period, for religious opinions published by authority in the latter. It seems as though, like pent-up gases, the minds of Cranmer and others had acquired a sudden elasticity and power not before exhibited by them. . . . We recommend the clergy to study these, for the time, admirable practical little sermons, all of which, with an alteration here and there, might be used in our pulpits with occasional great advantage.”\*

\* *The Reformed Church of England in its Principles and their legitimate Development*; a Contribution to the Settlement of existing Controversies. Page 67. (London: Mitchell and Hughes.)



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### ORIGINAL AND BORROWED PRAYERS.

THE title we have given to this chapter may excite some surprise in the minds of the clergy, because the ideas it conveys are not often subject to their experience. Although prayer is as inherent in the nature of a Christian religion as are the existence and attributes of God, and its duty is pressed by practical religion on all classes, from the lisping child to the veteran believer on his deathbed, and in all these cases is presumed to be spontaneous, it is a remarkable fact that the devotions of the members of the Church of England are everywhere presumed to be provided for them, so that the knees cannot be bowed in prayer to God unless a printed form is before the eyes of the worshippers. It is true that the Book of Common Prayer mainly concerns only devotions in church, but numerous circumstances in the history of the Church and its literature convey the impression that free and extempore prayer is not encouraged, or, we might say, even recognised in the Church of England. We have, in Holy Scripture, the prayers of great and good men which must have originally been spontaneous, though offered up in public ; and we find, in the Book of Psalms, the most pathetic penitential supplications, and the most joyous praises ; while in the New Testament there is nothing, from the beginning

to the end, to shew that the apostles and teachers of the Church carried forms of prayer about with them. On the contrary, it is expressly stated by St. Paul, that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. viii. 26.

How entirely contrasted with this direction, to look to the Holy Spirit for guidance in prayer, would be the exhortation of an English clergyman to the members of his communion, if writing on a similar topic; for he would regard it as quite sufficient if the individual believer were to use the words of the Book of Common Prayer as embodying all his spiritual wants. Perhaps we put the matter rather too strongly, in applying this observation to all private Christians; but in reference to the clergy, in all their public offices, the command is imperative, as given in the Act of Uniformity, that not one word of prayer shall escape the lips of deacon or priest, except what is provided for him in print; so that whatever we might suppose to be suggested to a pious soul by the Holy Spirit—whether in public prayer, at the Holy Communion, at the Ministration of Baptism, at Confirmation, and at all the minor offices of the Church,—the minister's lips must not utter it!

The contrast between this state of things and that known to the ancient Church is remarkable, for a clergyman, in the present day, when proceeding to perform his public ministrations, could not very well say, "Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise," since everything to

be requested or deprecated is, *verbatim et literatim*, ready prepared for him. But while we say this, we are by no means blaming our Church for such stringent regulations, knowing, as we do, that they were called for at a peculiar crisis in her history, and by the necessity imposed by the peculiar constitution of the minds with which she had to deal. In her case, at the time of the Reformation, the "spirits of the prophets" were not always "subject to the prophets," and permission to use extempore prayer in public would certainly have let loose a "Babel of strange sounds," and heresy and sedition would often have made it their mouthpiece. It is often the case in the institutions of human society, that what would not, in the nature of things, have been thought of is introduced by expediency; and as certain clauses of the Athanasian Creed were conceived and ordered to be used to keep heresy in check, so is extemporaneous prayer discouraged by the Church to prevent the exuberance of error and disorder into which its common use would have led us. Probably most of the clergy submit quietly to these stringent regulations, but the more warm and energetic spirits champ the bit, and would gladly be free from it; and many free prayers are put up in our churches with the connivance of our Ordinaries, and probably, in some cases, with the warrant of their example. A free prayer before the sermon is employed in numerous instances, and he must be a rigid devotee of forms who cannot occasionally interpolate a short petition in cases of public or private trouble, or when events of great national interest excite the public mind. But this is a

matter on which we are not called to give advice, nor should we have alluded to it had it not been for its important bearing on the delivery of sermons in our pulpits; for nothing can be more certain than that extempore preaching is encouraged and fostered by extempore prayer, in all religious communities, where the latter is practised. In a former part of this volume we have mentioned several methods of encouraging the habit of free public speaking employed by the Nonconformists, among whom we must include, for this purpose, the Church of Scotland; and we now add to them the constant habit of free private and public prayer which, in candidates for the ministry, is as assiduously cultivated as extempore speaking itself. If praying before an assembly, as ideas and words present themselves, requires the same kind of self-possession as preaching does, though not the same amount of it, it is evident that those who practise it must be helped in their pulpit performances to a degree which a clergyman of the Church of England can know nothing of, not only in the utterance of ideas, but in the acquisition of a more complete *copia verborum*. We ventured to throw out these few hints, casting, as it were, our bread (corn) upon the waters in the hope that it may, in some way or other, bear fruit. One suggestion we may, however, add,—is it desirable, or in accordance with the great duty of the Church, to cultivate in her ministers and people constant communion with God? if so, ought we to prohibit that free access to Him which is the very essence of extemporaneous prayer? The old objection to which we have

referred, that permission to pray freely in our churches would lead to various abuses, cannot be sustained if the way in which the public exercise is conducted among the Dissenters is considered. As far as we know free prayer is conducted in their assemblies with far more of the appearance of dignity and devotion than it often is in our parish churches. From the time of the Reformation several treatises have been published, intended to guide ministers to an orderly and profitable method of praying freely in public, the best known one being that of Dr. Isaac Watts.

The restraint of which we have been speaking can only be said to exist in the Church of England in reference to public worship, or to those occasions for which forms of prayer are provided, and these by no means exhaust the opportunities for offering up free prayer, which present themselves almost daily in a clergyman's experience. We will not presume for a moment that a devout Christian minister confines himself to printed form when he bows his knees in his study, and presents before God his own wants and those of his family, and what he considers to be the wants of his parishioners, of his country, of the Church of God, and of all mankind. The very idea is an absurdity, and the conclusion is inevitable that, however our Church may have limited her permissions of free prayer in her public services and in the visitation of the sick, nature and reason both teach us that the lips must often be opened in spontaneous effusions of supplications and praise, unless, indeed, a priest of the Church comes to be regarded as a praying machine,

with no freedom or power to adapt his words to the feelings and wants of the heart. At the daily opening of schools, at pastoral visits, at the bedside of the sick, and other occasions too numerous to be mentioned, a clergyman should have the power of using extemporaneous prayer, and of adapting and wording his petitions according to the almost infinite variety of the occasions which present themselves. Our remarks appear to ourselves so natural and obvious, that we should not have thought of printing them in this place had we not known instances in which "Priests of the Temple" have not had courage to repeat even the Lord's prayer before their fellow Christians, unless they had had it printed in their hands. Such a rigid fettering of the mind and heart must be injurious through the whole course of ministerial duty, while on the other hand a greater freedom and a power to use it for the benefit of others must be advantageous in many ways, especially as assisting to greater freedom in the pulpit which it is the special object of this volume to encourage.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### INTERCHANGE OF SERMONS AND PULPITS.

ALL that we have hitherto written on the difficulties of providing a sufficient stock of sermons for parochial use, and the scandal sometimes created by their manufacture and purchase should be considered in connection with the fact that hundreds of new sermons are written every year, and that many thousands must now be lying unused and unproductive in the studies of the clergy. These two things, the shifts to which some men are put to provide pulpit addresses, and the great numbers of good homilies at present unemployed suggest the obvious enquiry, Cannot the whole of the existing sermons be regarded as a common stock and employed for the general good, so as to be used for the purpose of giving some ease to those who are hard worked, and diffusing greater variety among our congregations? Were any plans of Church reform of a parochial and practical kind to be adopted by the Church at large, it would be quite possible to frame a system by which this large amount of mental and literary labour could be made a hundred-fold, or even a thousand-fold, more productive than it now is; but in the present state of the public mind such a scheme will appear chimerical, and we need at present pursue it no further.

But a more simple and easy way of economising

sermon production on something of a joint-stock principle is ready to hand everywhere, and is, indeed, practised more or less widely by the clergy at large; we mean the exchange of pulpits by clergymen whose parishes are conterminus, not only for the purpose of pleading for religious and charitable societies, but with the avowed object of easing each other's labours and giving greater variety to the ministrations presented to our people. Of late years many parishes have adopted a parish magazine, the covers of which would be an excellent medium for advertising these parochial interchanges, and there could be no question that the circulation of such information would greatly interest the mass of the people. Without in the least undervaluing the pulpit abilities of their own clergymen, parishioners would receive a little intellectual stimulus from the expectations of this slight novelty, and good in the end would no doubt be accomplished.

It may be suggested, and probably with some truth, that the great bulk of the clergy would think such a plan too cumbrous and entailing difficulties more than out-weighing any advantages which might accrue from it. A plan anything like that which we have presented could certainly be adopted only when a high opinion was generally entertained of the necessity of careful pulpit preparation, for a preacher would hesitate to submit to repeated criticism anything upon which he had not bestowed great care. Lord Carnarvon, in his address to the Conference at Winchester, in speaking of the mental quality of ordinary parochial discourses, would seem



to intimate that to be fitted for the exchange system which we are proposing they must have a higher degree of efficiency. His lordship says :—

“ I may, perhaps, sum up my observations on these various subjects by saying that I should view with satisfaction any modification of our present practice which would infuse more life and reality into the too conventional and formal character of so many of our sermons; that I should not even regret to see a reduction of them in point of number and length; that I should hail the use of some of those published sermons of which so large and remarkable a collection exists, suited to the needs of almost every kind of English congregation; and that elocution and practice of extemporary preaching might be studied and extended with advantage in certain cases.”

Lord Carnarvon has been attracted to the Wesleyan Methodist system of economising pulpit labour—as, indeed, all thoughtful persons must have been who have seriously regarded our Church’s exigencies,—and he suggests the employment of lay preachers to a far greater extent than has been usual in our times. Such remarks may fructify at some future period when questions like these shall have their due weight in those Conferences and Convocations which, if our Church is destined to lead a long and healthy life, must become a constant and energetic part of her organisation. No Churchman, whether lay or clerical, can have read the full reports of the Wesleyan Conference for the present year (1880) without earnestly desiring that something so efficient and far-extending may, ere long,

become a regular part of our Church's work. Lord Carnarvon's remarks upon this point are as follows :

“ And with a view to some, if not all of these objects, it seems to me to deserve consideration whether the appointment by the bishop of a certain number of preachers specially qualified by study and natural fitness to visit and preach in the different parishes of the diocese, with the consent and, perhaps, on the invitation of the incumbent, might not lead to very useful results. Such a practice is familiar not only to Roman Catholics, but to Wesleyans and, I believe, Lutherans, the Wesleyan rule being, if I am not mistaken, for the chief minister of the circuit to visit and preach in each chapel within that circuit once in the course of the year. I will even go a step further, and will venture to suggest whether, under due precautions and limitations, the licensing of laymen to preach might not draw to the support of the Church and the cause of true religion the services of many who might bring to the task learning and zeal, and those gifts of eloquence and personal persuasion by which God may be served as well through the mouths of laymen as of clergy.”

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### CATHOLIC TRUTH AND NOVEL OPINIONS.

WE have now passed over nearly the whole field of literature included in the title of this volume—*The Art of Preaching and the Composition of Sermons*; and, in reviewing and reconsidering the former chapters, we confess to a consciousness that the clergy have not had full justice done to them as to the substance of their sermons. We have alluded more than once to the adverse criticisms of writers in various journals, and especially in the newspaper press, the preaching of our pulpit being regarded as below the requirements of our time, and, with many noble exceptions, below what might be expected of an extensive literary class, representing the social position, the natural abilities, and the professional culture of our aristocracy. We may as well admit at once that the “company of the preachers” composing the clerical staff of the Church of England would allow of great improvement, and that in the light of their advantages we may properly look for better things of them in the time to come. But that admission will not invalidate the fact that such criticisms are generally incapable of being sustained in regard to the substance of the sermons preached all over England within our Church establishment. In a former chapter we have incidentally referred to the

guarantee furnished by the dogmatic status, and demands of our Church that her teaching shall be catholic, in the sense of being identical from age to age, and not "a thing of shreds and patches" as might easily have been the case if dogmatic and traditional restraints had not existed. We shall now pursue the subject a little further, and give prominence to the fact that, whatever our clergy *might* perform as orators, dialecticians, and leaders of the public mind, they are strictly limited in all these spheres of intellectual action by their being members of the Church Catholic. They cannot say or do the things that they would, being limited in the same sense as St. Paul was when he wrote those emphatic apothegms: "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 16); and "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (2 Cor. xiii. 8); or, in the charge to Timothy, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. ii. 2). The moral restraint thus laid upon us operates in two ways:—It limits the scope and sphere of our literary materials, and guards and restrains our utterances of those which we possess. We could quote more than one literary criticism on the alleged powerlessness of religious instruction on the people at large; and, as one cause of it, the inefficiency of the clergy as public teachers. This is an old subject, since it may be found creating disturbance even in apostolic times, when self-will strove to set itself free from divinely-appointed rules; and the same temper may be discovered in every age from that to the present.

That to be religious, in the highest sense, a man has only to attend to *himself*, and that, as the legitimate result of this doctrine, he may be his own prophet and priest is a very antique dogma indeed, although it is dressed up in an eloquent style and enforced by specious arguments by public writers. In all these criticisms it is taken for granted that nothing but the merest generalities are taught in the New Testament as to the office of Christ's ministers, and the outward form of his Church. Indeed, such writers seem to think that their researches need not go beyond the Protestant Reformation for any data for their reasonings—one long stride excepted, across the gulf of fifteen centuries,—for the purpose of bringing the New Testament upon the arena of modern Christian polemics. What private judgment can find in the Gospels and Epistles, and what was taught by the uneasy and often unsettled spirits who changed the outward form of the Church in the sixteenth century, constitute the sole materials by which such writers form their judgment; while the vast and ancient system of doctrine and government which began with the apostles, and was continued substantially the same to our day, is quietly ignored as furnishing no principles, and teaching no lessons worthy of being listened to. Conduct like this is just the same as if writers on law were to date all their reasonings from the Reform Bill, a reference to Magna Charta only excepted; while all the stately fabric which existed from the reign of John to that of William the IV. is hardly glanced at. But, as no one would be listened to who should attempt to

declaim on the British Constitution with no acknowledged materials to work from but Magna Charta and the Reform Bill, so those writers ought to have little weight and power who think it sufficient to propound theories on the Church from no other documents than those of the New Testament and the Reformation. It will tend more than anything else to detect sophistries on Church subjects to remember that the Scriptures and the Church, as a corporate body from the beginning, must go together, and that it is vain to expect to understand either of them properly without the other. By these writers no authority is conceded for the outward form of the Church and the true character and position of her priests but what is found in the New Testament ; and since that holy book does *not* define all the features and peculiarities of an institution which existed in perfect beauty before its own separate histories and letters had been collected together and obtained canonical authority, it follows that *any* and *every* system of Church government may be discovered there according to the subjective tendencies of the reader. Hence such writers as we are speaking of find no difficulty in denying any defined form to the Church, any distinctive character to the clergy, or any real channels of Divine grace, and, as the consequence of this, if Christian ordinances do not accomplish what they think they should do they vote them obsolete impertinencies, to be swept away at once to make room for some more modern experiments on the human intellect and soul. This must appear very sacrilegious to all who sincerely believe, as we do, that the Church is

a Divine institution, not only in certain principles, but also in fixed forms ; yet, bad as such opinions seem to the Catholic Christian, they are now entertained by vast numbers of persons, and are advocated with much eloquence and much shew of learning by many public instructors.

But the dominance of literature and a literary taste combines, with a confidence in private judgment, to depreciate the Church and the Clergy. The multiplication of books, and the raising of literature to a profession, have tended, necessarily, to place religious services and pulpit exercises in a very disadvantageous position in the eyes of all who do not see how they are limited by Divine authority. If public prayers do not harmonize with the tastes of readers of newspapers and magazines, let them be altered and fashioned to some new model. If the preacher fails to excite attention by topics as old as St. Paul let him by all means remember that the modern schoolmaster is abroad, and teach the people philosophy and politics. It is by instituting comparisons where they are not legitimately admissible that so much is now received and said against the Church and the clergy. Men get a certain excitement from powerful articles in the *Times* and sundry monthlies and quarterlies, and they see what can be done by certain popular lecturers ; and, failing to find anything corresponding with this in the services of the Lord's Day, they blame the Common Prayer and the clergy. When they ought to look for substance, they ask for manner ; for the old truths of the Gospel, they demand them dressed up and disguised in eloquent

phrases and modern philosophies. A ploughman is satisfied with the Sunday's performances of his minister, because he brings with him no intellectual remembrances with which to compare them; but an inquisitive mechanic fresh from the *People's Journal*, or *Weekly Dispatch*, finds the same services "flat, stale, and unprofitable." In higher life it is not ignorance, but principle, which makes one thoughtful man satisfied with his parish priest, while his neighbour, equally thoughtful, can scarcely sit out the half-hour demanded for the delivery of his discourse. The former remembers the differences of things, and sees that Christian ministrations are necessarily confined to a fixed routine; while the latter confounds things that differ, and expects to find in a parish priest the qualities of a Cicero or a Brougham.

The fixed dogmatic teaching of our Church is objected to as standing in the way of moving our congregations, and so also is the personal unfitness of the clergy. We willingly concede that there are advantages in a man not being bound by fixed principles, and being permitted to rove at large in the field of Christianity; so we also admit that the clerical profession would find room for a large number of orators. But we put both these *desiderata* into the same category—their general attainment is simply impossible. Thanks to God, the great bulk of the clergy would not, if they were allowed, shake off the yoke of the ancient Creeds of Christendom; and as to eloquent preachers, their number is limited by no less a decree than the arrangement of Divine Providence. Such exceptional cases as



those of the late Mr. Robertson, of Brighton, the late Canon Melville, and the late Bishop Wilberforce, or other popular preachers, are appealed to as if they settled the question and justified all the tirades against "pulpit humdrum;" yet the examples adduced are really quite fatal to the argument of the writer. Let our readers attentively study the pictures which have been drawn of popular preachers,—and we readily confess they are beautiful ones, and worthy of all imitation,—and they will see that the qualities predicated of them are rare, and that if they were to be demanded in candidates for Holy Orders, the churches of England must be closed in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred. An enormous fallacy lies under all such *ad captandum* arguments which attempt to shew that, because one preacher has great qualities, all ought to be equally endowed; it is requiring what never has been and never can be found.

A moderate degree of learning, much theological knowledge, and an earnestness of purpose, should be demanded of all Christian priests, because they are all attainable by everyone who is a candidate for the office; but the grace of elocution, and the deeper qualities of powerful oratory, it would be absurd to require. Aim at them as much as you please, for we need them, but, after every effort is put forth to call them into being, they will be but rare. God does not form men orators in sufficient plenty to make it reasonable for us to demand fluency and power of speech as a *sine quâ non* of the clerical office. And thus we see the wisdom of the Divine arrangement of the Church; for what is thus gene-

rally unattainable is not generally wanted for efficient Christian ministration. We read in the New Testament of but one Apollos, and yet of vast numbers who could preach the Word and dispense Divine ordinances ; and so, in our day, we have an occasional Robertson, Melville, and Wilberforce, but thousands of patient and conscientious parish priests. This is, we think, as it should be ; for really no other state of things seems to be possible. A high-pressure strain upon candidates for the ministry would doubtless somewhat increase the number of orators ; but, if multiplied tenfold they would still be exceptions to the rule. What is politely called "dullness" and "humdrum" would still be the reigning characteristics of parish priests.

It is the Truth which is to benefit men in public religious services, and when they come to them desirous of learning they will seldom be disappointed. If, by any peculiar state of things, people come to have "itching ears" or despise plain food and seek after intellectual luxuries, in the name of all that is just and true, we ask, how can the clergy be held accountable for not satisfying such pruriency, such disordered appetites ? The Church of God aims at the lowering of human pride, and the checking of all worldly and selfish tastes and desires ; and yet such a clergy as our critics demand would cultivate those unregenerate tendencies. It is Self which is pandered to when men seek eloquent preachers ; and no body of people go away from divine service so satisfied with their own position and character as those who have been entranced by a popular pulpit orator. There are exceptions,

of course, and we should hope that great preachers do convert sinners from the error of their ways ; but in the great majority of cases those who demand oratory on Sunday are parties well satisfied with their own opinions and practices, and not greatly disposed to stand afar off and smite upon their breasts and cry, " God be merciful to us sinners."

We enter, then, our decided protest against the asserted inefficiency of the clerical order, as far as it includes the ministers of the Church of England.

We know very numerous parishes and we do not know one whose minister is not earnest, faithful, and useful, although the plans and operations of some of them are more zealous and popular than those of others. They do their work well, when that work is considered to be the ministration of Divine things, the instruction of the ignorant, the edifying of the people of God. We do not see how the state of parishes generally would be at all improved by such popular preachers, but we rather acquiesce in the present more permanent results of less shewy ministrations. If the services of Sunday are to be exciting intellectual exercises, then, indeed, the clergy must be pronounced inefficient as a body ; but if their object is to fit men for the duties of the week by teaching them their duty to God and their neighbours, then, we say, the present order of men is well adapted for the work. At the same time let us not be misunderstood as maintaining that there is no room for improvement, for nothing could be more contrary to our convictions and aims, as will be evident to the readers of our former chapters. But the improvements would be

those of individuals in the discharge of their present duties, not in the nature of the duties themselves. We trust our brethren will not be led by such criticisms as we have been commenting upon to distrust the power of the means in their hands, or to devise new things to "get up" a little popularity. We do know cases where a little leaning to the cant of the day respecting new services for working men, has done harm by throwing discredit on the parochial system and making men dissatisfied with their own ministers.

But we must again repeat, that what we have now written is far from being intended to apologize for dullness, still less to form an excuse for culpable negligence. We have known many instances, as we doubt not all our readers do, of clergymen who not only neglect eloquence, but also could not define what it is, and who neither in thought nor feeling are capable of moving in the least degree the sensual and inert materials presented to them from Sunday to Sunday. On behalf of these we have nothing to say, and the sooner the Church is relieved from their deadening influence the better. May the Divine Spirit work the great miracle of making them more spiritual!

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE DAILY STUDY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

IN our public ministrations there is, perhaps, no duty we more frequently inculcate on our people than the daily and devout study of the Word of God, a practice which is enjoined by the Bible itself, and the benefit of which has been attested by the simultaneous and successive experience of the Church. If we succeed in our attempt, and our hearers become practical lovers of the Bible, we know that our work is rewarded, and that private and public consistency is the sure result; but if we fail, and our congregations confess that the Scriptures *should* have their daily attention, and at the same time neglect them, we are equally certain that no valuable fruit will crown a religious profession. Instability, half-heartedness, and a quick yielding to temptation will disappoint our hopes, and if apostacy is not the result, at least declension and backsliding are inevitable.

As we are men of like passions with those whom we seek to instruct, we need all their stimulants to a vigorous piety, and all their appliances for a prosperous and happy course. Even if any of us should, by an erroneous training, have undue notions of ministerial authority, extending even in some cases to priestly arrogance, we are not allowed to exempt ourselves from the common duties connected with final salvation, since St. Paul brought

himself and Timothy within their blessed and salutary circle. The former eminent minister of Christ says of himself, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection ; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away," and in writing to Timothy he exhorts him to the practice of every religious and self-denying duty. But any *argument* here is confessedly out of place, since we all acknowledge that whatever is necessary for the humblest believer is at least as necessary for ourselves. To search the Scriptures daily is doubtless an imperative personal duty with all of us ; never attended to without sensible benefit, never neglected without manifest loss. But still we may become negligent in attending to what we acknowledge to be of vital importance. The judgment and the affections may not always be accordant, and while the hand and the eye are reverentially engaged with the Holy Volume, the thoughts may wander far away.

If we are sincere in pressing on our hearers a devout and daily reading of the Scriptures, we must be guilty of suicidal folly when we neglect them ourselves. We tell those committed to our trust, that their joys will be enhanced and their sorrows alleviated, their sins subdued and their graces established by this practice. Have *we* no joys which a halo of Divine light may make brighter ? No sorrows which the rainbow hues of hope may partly dissipate ? Have we not to wrestle with the fiend within ourselves, sometimes with such a sense of our own weakness, that "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," is needed to secure the

victory ? Do not our languishing and faded graces call for heavenly dew to refresh them ? Who can be more sensible of all this than we are ? And when we say, from the pulpit, "Neglect not the daily devout reading of the Scriptures," where can we find more proper subjects for the exhortation than ourselves ? Can we think, without grief and alarm, of the possibility of blessing the poor and the unknown, and the afflicted by this advice, while *we* experience not its blessedness ? To avoid this loss, let us be ourselves mighty in this use of the Scriptures.

Our own conscientious performance of this duty can alone enable us to enforce it properly upon others. The worst sermon, indeed, is that which is the utterance of neither the judgment nor the heart ; but the next worst is that whose statements we believe but do not act upon. Few preachers, probably, are ignorant of the damping, cooling effect produced by the remembrance, in the midst of some energetic enforcement of a duty, *that we are neglecting it ourselves !* Eloquence is stopped in its flow, a blush suffuses the cheek, and a sense of shame oppresses the heart. If in any place the fine heathen maxim is to be observed, the pulpit pre-eminently demands that its spirit should be obeyed by those occupying that responsible and honourable position :—

" Nil conscire sibi, nullâ pallescere culpâ."

How dishonest would it be, on our part, to urge the man of business and the labourer to devote a portion of their valuable time to a duty which we, with more opportunities, are neglecting !

Although, at first sight, a priest of the Church appears more favourably situated than his hearers for the cultivation of the spirit and practice of devotion, a nearer investigation will shew that he is surrounded with peculiar dangers. Ecclesiastical life has temptations more severe and fiery in proportion as its duties are more honourable and exalted; and it should not, therefore, excite so much surprise, nor occasion so much scandal, when Christian ministers unhappily fall from their high position. The danger alluded to arises from the indifference and formality generated by mere ex-official performances. A surgeon is well aware of the tendency of his pursuits to produce a callousness to the emotions of pity and tenderness in relation to physical suffering; and every clergyman ought to know that his daily official acquaintance with the great themes of salvation tends to blunt his feelings and produce an undue prominence of the exercises of the head over those of the heart. Turning over the Bible to find texts for sermons and topics for their illustration is a process of mere mental mechanism, which may be sanctified, indeed, as was the work of the tabernacle by the solemn feeling of the priests. But, on the other hand, we may so transact these formal applications to the Scriptures that our situation may be like that of Uzzah at the ark of God. A daily and devout reading of the Bible, in connection with personal meditation and prayer, will be the best defence against the evil; for that which has been associated with our own experimental religion we shall not be likely to profane.

The scholar-like habits which should distinguish



the Christian minister, and the critical investigations which his office requires him to pursue, are eminently perilous, and demand every guard which piety and devotion can give. Surprise has often been expressed that celebrated Biblical scholars should sometimes have been men of little personal religion, or should so frequently have been lost in the labyrinths of doctrinal error. But a little consideration will not only render this phenomenon explicable, but will also diminish our surprise at its occurrence. Biblical learning is not Biblical religion. As that master of a Divine philosophy, John Smith, says (*Select Discourses*: Cambridge, 1673): "When the tree of knowledge is not planted by the tree of life, and sucks not up sap from thence, it may be as well fruitful with evil as with good, and bring forth bitter fruit as well as sweet." Every studious clergyman must have felt the influence of critical studies, *when exclusively pursued*, in deadening his religious affections and making him, for a time, dull and inert in the exercises of the Divine life. What is the obvious remedy for this? Not, certainly, to avoid such studies, for they *must* be pursued by every right-minded and upright theologian. A sincere inquirer after truth *cannot* rest in uncertainties, and he feels that in blinding himself to the existence of various readings and doubtful and disputed interpretations, he is acting on the principle that discretion is the better part of valour. That preacher is not to be envied who *fears* to read carefully Strauss's *Leben Jesu*, although he might decline to do so on various grounds. The motto of our Bibles should be the

maxim of Luther, "Optimum grammaticum, eum etiam optimum theologicum esse." Our real safeguard is to look upon critical labours as our daily duties, and to seek, in their performance, those aids which we press upon our hearers in the discharge of theirs. The man who habitually reads his Bible as one who needs himself its saving and consolatory truths will never be led into indifference by the critical study of its contents. Our course, then, is clear. We have dangers, but they are those arising from the honourable and arduous nature of our profession, and are to be met and overcome by a daily and devout reading of the Word of God.

The duty we are now inculcating has a special reference to the preparation of sermons for the pulpit. We have elsewhere observed that it is highly important that a man whose profession is preaching should have his memory well stored with texts of Holy Scripture, the substance of which, indeed, must form the most important part of his discourses. When a young clergyman first comes to his work of composing a sermon, he will soon be made aware of the inestimable blessing which has become his in the education of early life, if it has been a Scriptural one—if his memory is continually bringing before him the Bible lessons which he read in childhood, or which he heard read by others in the devotions of the family. If the mind were suddenly to be made bare of these Biblical texts and illustrations how unfit he would feel himself for his work, since he would have to gain *de novo* the Bible knowledge without which his sermon-making could not go on. But a clergyman who acts on the

advice given in this chapter will daily accumulate hints for sermons, and for their filling up and amplification. A passage of Scripture which makes a deep impression upon us when it is read in the study with a devotional end in view, will be, indeed, like "a nail fastened in a sure place," according to the homely aphorism of the ancient Jewish preacher.

There is no doubt a great sameness perceptible when the same book is read every day, although that book may be the Bible, and this fact points to the great advantage possessed by the minister who can read the Hebrew and Greek originals. When that attainment is possessed, it will be found that every verse which comes under our notice is suggestive of some enquiry relating either to criticism or hermeneutics, and the mind will roam tentatively over those fields of knowledge which contribute to the correct interpretation of the Word of God.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### HOME LIFE IN RELATION TO THE WORK OF THE PULPIT.

IN the early part of the present volume we referred to what might be passing in the mind of a young curate respecting his future marriage, and we suggested the presumption that such a contemplated change of life might somewhat interfere with clerical duty. The subject is one of great practical importance, and, as it bears on preaching, we may here enter upon it somewhat fully; the topic is one dwelt upon in the New Testament, and occupies a prominent place in the practical ethics of the Catholic Church, although it was treated with reprehension by our own Reformers, which cannot be wondered at when we consider the great abuses which compulsory clerical celibacy introduced into the Church. That St. Paul thought it desirable, in his day and in the circumstances of his time, that ministers should remain unmarried is quite plain from his advice to the Corinthians, and it cannot be doubted that to maintain a life of celibacy would leave our clergy more free to perform their parochial duties, especially those of the pulpit. We will not now refer to the greater time they would have for study and pulpit preparation, for the case of the great Hooker would deprive such an argument of most of its force, who, as our readers are

aware, wrote the *Ecclesiastical Polity* with a family around him. We allude more to the *res Angusta domi* which must operate upon a clergyman unfavourably in two ways, either by filling him with domestic anxiety, or making him too careful to gain the favour of the wealthy and to avoid giving them offence. These motives will imperceptibly operate, even in conscientious and noble minds, especially when the voice of affectionate counsel bids the pastor to be careful in his treatment of topics which might create a prejudice against him.

We may observe, in the first place, that the work of preparing addresses to a congregation on the solemn subjects of religious life and on our future destiny, necessarily demands that the mind should be kept free from worldly and harassing cares, and especially those connected with personal matters. A man may be deeply interested in a war which is going on, or in Parliamentary debates involving great national interests, and yet be able to dismiss these topics altogether when he sits down to compose a sermon; but he will not be able, with the same ease, to forget what is going on in his own household, and the call of a tradesman for money due will not be so easily kept out of his memory. Happy are those who know nothing of these carking cares, which so often suggest unpleasant dreams and give pain on the first hours of waking! Of course a man of large income, who is extravagant, may be teased in this way even more than a poor one; but we are now speaking only of a curate or incumbent whose poverty is known and acknow-

ledged by all his parishioners as well as by himself, and whose straightened circumstances must harass his mind and interfere with his pulpit compositions.

In the second place, the thoughts of one so unhappily situated in reference to an insufficient income, will go out of the study to his parishioners, and invest them with associations not favourable to independence of thought, or faithfulness in the inculcation of Christian duties. The pertinency of this remark will be evident when we recognise the fact that St. Paul was under the influence of this feeling, and avoided unnecessary dependence on the benevolence of his hearers, lest the freedom of his preaching should either be interfered with in reality or appear to be so in the conception of those placed under his care. The apostle, indeed, laid down and maintained the great principle that they who preached the Gospel should live of the Gospel; but, consistently with this, he was careful that none of his hearers should bring the question of his support before him, as reflecting upon the entire mental freedom of his ministrations. We will quote one passage to this effect, as the subject is of very great importance. In 2 Cor. xi. 7, he asks: "Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the Gospel of God freely? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man; for that which was lacking to me the brethren, which came from Macedonia, supplied; and in all things I have

kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia." Other passages to the same purpose might be quoted, but this cannot be necessary as there will hardly be one reader of this volume who will not at once confess that the *res pecuniaria* or *domestica* must have a great share in securing the ease, or promoting the disquiet, of every parish priest in the discharge of his homiletical duties.

The remedies for this state of things, which occur to the mind, may be the following, among others. The most summary one—the cutting, as it were, of the knot—is the celibacy of the clergy, which, as a rule, though not necessarily so, so reduces clerical expenditure as to make the lowest stipends consistent with freedom from debt and personal independence; but on this we shall say nothing, as the voice of nature and the results of all general experience will be at once raised against it. The evils attending an ecclesiastical law enjoining clerical celibacy must be considered in conjunction with the immense advantages of the married state in the influences which it brings to bear upon a parish, both in its public and private relations, and which forms the well-known beautiful picture of the country parson and his wife and family, which so many of our poets and prose writers have combined to delineate. A second remedy would be, that none but men of independent means should be admitted by the bishop to Ordination, a plan which would disorganise the Church

of Christ in both its principles and its practice, and which cannot be, for a moment, discussed.

The third remedy, as it is the most natural, so it is the most feasible, in an Established Church, namely, that every one who has the cure of souls should be adequately supplied by the Church itself, with what would be considered necessary for a respectable maintenance, so that the clergy themselves would be made to feel that their want of independence is the result of their own imprudence and folly. It may be interesting and important to give here an illustration of this system which is near to our own doors, and which may be leisurely considered by Churchmen when asking the question, 'How may the Church's organization be reformed?' We allude to the economics of the Wesleyan body, by which, not only is a stipend ensured to the ministers, but a careful account is taken of all the extra charges which may, in different cases, be incurred by them—such as the number of their children, their expenses in travelling from circuit to circuit, and the contingencies of sickness and inability to discharge their ministerial duties. Not only does this system shelter a man from the various accidents and contingencies by which he might be prevented from paying his way, but it also raises to a position of respectability a mode of living which, if considered apart from its official character, would be thought too poor and humble. As far as our observation has extended the position of Wesleyan ministers is such as to ensure the comfort of themselves and their families, and the respect of society at large.



But after all that has been said, the way to reduce to a minimum the inconveniences and the evils which now so frequently present themselves, as arising from clerical impecuniosity, must be looked for in the general spirit and temper of the Church in regard to the standard of living, and as to what constitutes a respectable position in society. England has much to answer for in the present age, in its love of show and its extravagance of living, which make it necessary that a man with a family should not only have a sufficient income to avoid debt, but also a stoical indifference to the opinions of those around him, in order to prevent him from following their example and falling into their perils. In a Clerical Society to which we belonged some time ago, this subject was largely and freely discussed, and the conclusion was arrived at that the social life of parishes should not make the demand upon the clergy, to imitate its example in its manner of living, but should shew its respect, more than it now does, of honourable mediocrity, and rather admire than despise a man who eschewed silver forks, good port wine, and Turkey carpets. But the clergy have the matter in their own hands more than their parishioners, and they will find that, if they make the experiment, they will be more and not less respected if they avoid the elegancies and luxuries which so often bring members of their flocks into trouble.

But the pulpit independence of the clergy was little menaced in the olden time from the causes we are now considering; the danger has been vastly extended by the system of pew rents, imported

illegally into some old parish churches only moderately endowed, but sanctioned by law, ecclesiastical and civil, in hundreds of new districts scattered all over the land, in which incumbents are placed having, in many instances, the endowment of only £50, without which the law forbids the church to be consecrated. In addition to this dismal state of things, the doing away of Church rates threatens, in many instances, to eat up the curates' pittance by necessary expenses in maintaining Divine service; thus, the pay of the clergyman and the keeping the church in the condition necessary for ensuring a congregation, will make a man think too much of the Squire, the merchant and the tradesman, in the composition and delivery of his sermons; and the "fear of man, which bringeth a snare," will transform a robust English parochial parson, with a John Bull independence, into a pale, withered and anxious-looking preacher, such as Butler might have well immortalised in his "Hudibras." We have stated the case in an extreme and exaggerated way, but we believe we have expressed the truth notwithstanding.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE EXTENT AND THE RESTRAINTS OF PULPIT FREEDOM.

IN the very conception of a minister of Christ's Gospel the idea of entire freedom is innate and paramount. The command of our Lord to his disciples, "Be ye not called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ," is sufficiently indicative of this. The command, of course, refers only to the official position and character of the disciples, for in private and social life they were amenable to the same laws and regulations as the humblest of their brethren, and were taught to be all subject the one to the other. This personal and individual liberty is more clearly defined in our Lord's promises of Divine inspiration for the purposes of teaching and governing the Church; for while, in their collected capacity, the apostles were bound to confer and consult one with another, any command from heaven given to one of them made him entirely independent of the rest. This condition of things cannot, of course, exist in the ordinary state of Christian society, for the ministers of the Gospel can only be subject to the Word of God as contained in Holy Scripture, as the master and guide of their own consciences. Whatever, therefore, may be the restraints of ecclesiastical authority, or of voluntary societies, every man who professes to be led by the

Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel and minister in the Church must be bound by the decisions of the light within, and be ready, on sufficient occasion, to speak and to act as his conscience commands him. A young clergyman ordained as a priest to whom the cure of souls and the care of a parish are entrusted, must, or ought to have, from the beginning of his ministry, a precise idea of the extent and limits of the freedom and restraints of his office, since, on his properly-defined notions on both these points the success and happiness of his work will depend.

We have in previous parts of this volume, both by hints and actual statements, dwelt on the necessity of a parish priest being so far independent of his parishioners that he should never yield to the temptation to prepare a sermon solely to please them, or to keep out of it anything which his conscience tells him he ought to say for fear of offending them. We lay stress on the word *solely*, because there are many occasions when a distinct effort ought to be made to please a congregation, and such a course is expressly enjoined by St. Paul: "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" (Romans xv. 2); and one of the rules of oratory is, to aim at persuasion by gaining the goodwill of our hearers. But this personal sense of right, and official power, requires to be most delicately handled, or it may become the mere instrument of self-will, of an over-bearing spirit, or of personal petulance. If, for example, a clergyman has, during the week, met with something in a churchwarden, or an ordinary parishioner

which he knows to be wrong, his first impulse will perhaps, be to discountenance the offence by speaking of it in the pulpit, and when an offence or a scandal is publicly known this course may be indispensable; but a prudent man will long hesitate before he runs the risk that irritated persons, by their feeling, and not a strong sense of public duty, should urge him to make this public admonition. But, on the other hand, if he is conscious of being tempted to withhold certain opinions on doctrine or practical matters because he knows they will be distasteful to a churchwarden, or Squire, or another influential person, he must prayerfully and resolutely gird himself up to the performance of the necessary duty. We have no doubt that the difficulties of the two opposite states of mind—indiscretion in reproof on the one hand, and cowardice on the other—form the trials, more common, of all faithful clergymen; but the grand thing to be aimed at is this—to have “a conscience void of offence towards God and man.” It is sometimes difficult to decide which is worst, to be troubled on Monday morning by the conviction that on the past day we spake “unadvisedly with our lips,” or to be haunted with the thought—not the less painful because it is confined to our own breast—that we have been afraid to do our duty, lest we should give offence to our fellow-man. It will sometimes occur to our readers how much an error of the first kind may be assisted and urged on by an extempore discourse, entire freedom of speech being like throwing the reins on the neck of the steed, while careful writing in the close

will prove an effectual bit to restrain such a tendency.

But the freedom of the pulpit is more apt to be improperly restrained by official or political reasons, a condition of things fortunately not common in the present age, as it has been in former periods of our Church history. There are many traditions of the Star Chamber which make us thankful that it was put down before our age, and "Her Majesty's Council," of which we read in the Preface to the Homilies, has happily no terrors for us. Yet there is reason to fear that customs, and conventionalisms, and fashions, do often influence the minds of the clergy in cases where a high sense of public duty ought to guide them. If, in round numbers, we estimate the clergy who are beneficed and reside in their parishes at ten thousand, all of them men of education and social influence, what a mighty leverage is thus presented for moulding public opinion, and, when rightly used, of conferring immense blessings on the commonwealth, or, when timidly neglected, of encouraging evils which ought never to be countenanced in the pulpit or by any Christian man!

Our country has recently been much agitated by party conflicts, and we have heard that our Bishops have sometimes advised the clergy to "let politics alone" in their public ministrations. We can well understand the propriety of this advice if "politics" is intended to mean simply the interest of different and opposing parties in the country, such as Tory, Whig, or Radical, or the more modern epithets of Conservative and Liberal. But if, by

such an exhortation, it has ever been intended that the clergy should be silent when the immutable principles of truth and righteousness are at stake, every clergyman should indignantly reject the counsel. Every God-fearing man must have been painfully conscious, during the past few years, that wars have been waged by Britain which are not righteous, and that the glorious principles of forgiveness of enemies, and the value of immortal souls, have been lost sight of and given place to military ferocity and injustice. How many of our clergy during this period have feared God rather than man, and lost all sight of their own advantage or promotion by the favour and countenance of their superiors in the grand spectacle of a God pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin, and of a Saviour laying down his life as a ransom for many, and those his bitter enemies?

This is a solemn subject, and will, probably, concern the future more than the present, for the armies of a sinful world are mustering for the battle, and while dignities, and honours, and emoluments are plentifully poured at the feet of the demon of War, it becomes more and more difficult for peace-makers—"the blessed who are to inherit the earth"—to make their voices heard, and who, if they gain a hearing, receive only the reply of reproach and contumely. A faithful clergyman can find, in the Old and New Testaments, examples in abundance of the way in which he should treat the worship of Mammon and the intoxication of the War spirit of the times, and be contented to publish, again and again, the declaration of his Master,

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor : He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Public immorality inevitably leads to tampering with conscience, to losing a sense of right in expediency. Has not this been the course of things when, with all the injustice and misery of war before them, the clergy have forgotten—if ever they have done so—the permanent truth, or perhaps the most striking statement which ever proceeded from the lips of Christ, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth ;" or the equally sublime one, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" or, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Before a soldier, whether a general or a private, can direct his rifle at the head of one who can only be called his enemy by a figure of speech, how he must throw into the shade, or treat as non-existent, these Divine words !

It would be as useless as it would be imprudent for a clergyman to throw himself with enthusiasm into the political or social controversies of the times, and to endeavour to make the pulpit the *propaganda* of his advanced sentiments. But great truths may burn in the heart and influence our whole conduct without being exhibited in formulas or debated in logical propositions. It is only by the conviction that the clergy of our Church are viewing with bated breath and suppressed mental energy the great subjects which are working like leaven in the heart



of political and social life that we can feel respect for their quiet demeanour, or the little influence they put forth in relation to matters acknowledged to be of vital importance. The late Charles Kingsley will, in some degree, illustrate what we mean, who probed deeply some of the wounds of our social system, and exhibited the results of the diagnosis in novels and tales. We are not aware that he carried all his deep convictions into the pulpit, or made "Alton Locke" or "Hypatia" themes for his Sunday lectures; yet, who can doubt that the sentiments of these works tinged really and effectually, though hardly appreciably to a careless hearer, all that he said through his public ministry.

Now let us imagine, for a moment, that the ten thousand clergy of this country had convictions as deep as those of Kingsley on any great question affecting the temporal prosperity and spiritual well-being of the people—and what must be the result of such a great moral transformation? The doctrine of reserve in communicating moral and religious knowledge might operate, as far as consistent with any degree of courage, in keeping such exciting doctrines in the background, but their being held within the memory and occupying the mind and heart must tell powerfully on the Sunday performances of so great a number of earnest men. The case we are imagining has, no doubt, found its typical representative in all civilized times and countries, and the outspoken martyrs who have died for their faith have only been the bold and courageous utterers of opinions held by hundreds around them, who, from various motives, have con-

cealed their convictions. Without, therefore, urging or wishing our brethren to press to the front, and take the lead in solving the ethical and more material problems which agitate the heart of society, we must wish, at least, that they entertain them, and only waited for a more convenient opportunity of making them effective. Were this the case, the imperceptible influence of thought would, as we have just said, tinge and colour more or less the utterances of the pulpit, while here and there would appear the natural result of such suppressed principles and opinions: "I said I will take heed to my ways: that I offend not in my tongue. I will keep my mouth as it were with a bridle: while the ungodly is in my sight, I held my tongue and spake nothing. I kept silence, yea, even from good words; but it was pain and grief to me. My heart was not within me, and while I was thus musing the fire kindled; and at the last I spake with my tongue."

Let us apply what has now been said to the subject which is more or less understood in all the parishes of the land, or, if not understood, exerts a practical influence upon the mind of every man, woman, and child in this country. We need scarcely say that great subject is war, which from being, in its nature, contrary to the most elementary principles of Christianity, has become incorporated with Christian life and vernacular sentiment to an extent which can hardly be recognized, even by minds of average intelligence, unless the thinker pauses, stops in his way, and bends his attention to the consideration of the nature of that which he has

been taught is axiomatic and inevitable. By a deeper study of Christian principles, and a keener sympathy with the wants and miseries of mankind, a priest of the Church of England may come to abjure the beliefs of his generation, and to feel, with all the certainty of which his nature is capable, that war, if not absolutely in its own nature indefensible, is yet quite opposed to the Gospel of Christ, and if ever permissible must even then be regarded with horror by a Christian man. Rising from this first principle the clerical thinker would come to consider that what the precepts of Christ interdict and forbid, Christian society, in the nineteenth century, delights to honour ; so that a soldier is sent forth to slay or to be slain, in foreign lands, amidst the joyful acclamations of approving thousands, and if he returns successful receives rewards and honours accorded to no other profession. We at once concede that a man receiving enlightenment on this vital subject could not, prudently or safely, in the present state of society, ventilate his ideas in the pulpit, and could not even produce any good effect by mild expostulation. But while he has these deep convictions they must exert their influence gradually, in all his ministerial work, until the time is ripe, and the fire burns within him and he speaks with his tongue. What emphasis will be given, during all the period of this voluntary reserve, to texts which urge the duty of forgiveness, which forbid the return of evil for evil ; and how often will the preacher, in these circumstances, exhibit and extol the higher kinds of courage of which his Master

and his apostles were the prototypes and exemplars ; and, as a minister of Christ, will learn from his Master's precepts and example, the infinite higher value of the soul of man than of all earthly things put together—so the whole texture of his ministrations will convey the same idea, without any such plain statements, in reference to military glory, which would cause the worldly to blaspheme. We have made these few observations to shew more clearly what we mean by the title of this chapter,—“The Extent and the Restraints of Pulpit Freedom.”

As our present theme is of more than usual importance we will give another illustration of our meaning. There are many parishes in England and many cathedral towns where fairs, feasts, and wakes, annually, and sometimes oftener, corrupt the whole moral atmosphere for several days, and undo in that short period all the good that may have been done during the whole year by bishops, priests, and deacons, or by the more active energies of religious societies and Sunday schools. Yet it is not difficult to find numerous instances of the pulpits of those parishes either uttering no condemnation at all, or in very faint tones, of the excesses which they know to be going on round about them. The clergy see the mayor and corporation going in procession to open the feast or the fair ; or wealthy hotel-keepers, with whom they are friendly, are known by them to make large profits by their motley customers ; or there is such a large amount of comparatively innocent merry-making, mingled with the profane orgies, that

they think it best "not to interfere." Whenever a state of things like this presents itself to a parish priest it must be regarded as a clear case for conscience to speak out, if his own honour is to be maintained, or he is to prove that he possesses the character of a shepherd who cares for the flock.

The life of the clergy is ordinarily a sedentary one, and an Englishman of average health and spirits must often chafe under the restraints which his Ordination to the cure of souls necessarily lays upon him. Those who favour what is called a robust and muscular Christianity may be inclined, on this account, to look with some favour on field sports, as affording some counterpoise to the depressing influences of pastoral life. But such a counterpoise could only be desired by those who had entered upon the work of the ministry in its lowest conventional aspect. When St. Paul exhorted Timothy to "use hardness," as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, he had before him those noble exertions of the human mind which he employed himself in the work of the Gospel; and were he now with us, to stimulate us as he did Timothy, there is nothing in the changed political and social circumstances of our times which would lead him to give a different command. Can nothing be done by us, individually or collectively, to counteract the soporific tendency of a country-life, or a literary town life, or, in general, of the ministerial life which is framed and modelled more by the accumulated conventionalities of human frailty than by the quickening and inspiring precepts and examples of New Testament life? Our own conviction—the

result of a whole life's experience—decidedly is that literary and learned pursuits are as conducive to health as any others, provided, of course, that no one of them is carried to excess; and the clergy have reason to be grateful that their profession, and the solemn engagements of their Ordination, require of them to pursue studies which are at the same time highly intellectual and promotive of the health, both of body and mind. We have already insisted on the necessity of a competent acquaintance with the various branches of Biblical learning, and we are quite sure that if that is followed as it ought to be, there will be no dissatisfaction with our profession for its dullness, or any hankering after those occupations which Holy Scripture and the Church have always included among the “desires of the flesh and of the mind,” and which—if Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination present solid realities—are to be left behind in the course of Christ's ministers. The way in which Biblical studies ought to engross the time and attention of a clergyman will be sufficiently evident to those of our readers who will give their serious attention to the contents of Chapter XXXIV. of this volume.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### INFLUENCE OF THE MATERIAL PULPIT AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.

As an introduction to what we have to say on this subject, we feel we cannot do better than quote the following from that very reliable source of information, *Chambers's Encyclopædia* :--

“Pulpit (*Lat. pulpitum*), an elevated tribune or desk from which sermons, lectures, and other solemn religious addresses are delivered. In great churches the pulpit is commonly placed against the wall, or in juxtaposition with a pillar or buttress. Originally it would appear to have been used chiefly for the singing, chanting, or recitation which form part of the public service, and was a kind of stage sufficiently large to accommodate two or even more chanters. For the convenience of the hearers, this stage began to be used by the bishop, priest, or deacon, for the delivery of the homily; and thus, by degrees, a tribune expressly suited to the latter use alone came to be introduced. In some of the older churches the *ambo*, or *pulpitum*, is still used for the chanting of the Gospel and Epistle. In Roman Catholic churches the pulpit is generally distinguished by some religious emblems, especially by the crucifix; and the pulpits of the Low Countries and of Germany are often master-pieces of wood carving, the preaching-place, in some of them,

forming part of a great artistic group, as of the Conversion of St. Paul, the Vocation of Peter and Andrew, the Temptation of Adam and Eve, and other similar subjects. The pulpit (in Arabic, *mimber*) forms one of the scanty appliances of Mohammedan worship."

Since the period of the Reformation in England, preaching has become a more popular institution, so much so that it is somewhat surprising that pulpits in parish churches have not assumed a construction more typical of the free spirit which distinguished the sermons of the period ; but as far as we are aware they were never intended for the exhibition of an unencumbered oratory, but, by their cramped proportions, to adumbrate that fettered state of mind and doctrine which was the rule and not the exception of the sermons of the day. Sounding-boards were universal, and a door with a good latch, and sometimes a lock, was seldom wanting. A flight of steps of considerable height led up to this curious rostrum, and an admirer of church antiquities need not travel far, any Sunday in the year, to see the process which had long been stereotyped in the churches of the Anglican Communion. The desk was generally placed below the pulpit, and directly underneath it and below that, a third excrescence, also with a door, for "the clerk ;" the three constructions together taking up so much of the chancel as to overshadow the east end and the Communion table. At the conclusion of the prayers the minister came down from the desk, in his surplice, and went into the vestry, if there was one, and emerging from it, robed in a black gown



and preceded by a vergers, also in black gown, who, standing at the foot of the pulpit stairs, allowed the preacher to pass, and following him, closed the door and shut him in. In addition to this cumbrous paraphernalia, some pulpits of our churches, and even many modern ones, have a seat inside the door, which is lifted up by the vergers to let the parson enter, and put down behind him, so that he may if he pleases be seated in any little interval there may be in his own labours, such as singing the hymns. It is not many years ago that the present writer, after preaching in a pulpit in Buckinghamshire, found himself unable to get out, and had to make signs to the vergers to unfasten the door. To account for this curious circumstance, he was informed that a former vicar—having narrowly escaped tumbling backward, like Eli, from the seat where he had sought repose after the labour of preaching—had a strong bolt put on the door, which was the cause of this temporary imprisonment. This was always fastened by the vergers after he had seen the parson safely in and let down the seat behind him, but, in this instance, he had forgotten to draw the bolt at the end of the sermon.

We regard our times as enlightened, but if the world continues in existence long enough, what we have now correctly described will be recorded as among the barbarous antiquities of the Christian church. An hour-glass, in some instances, was added to the side of the pulpit, to enable the preacher to measure the length to which he had gone in preaching. In the authority quoted above we read

that, "The hour-glass was almost universally employed in churches during the sixteenth century, and continued in use till about fifty years ago. In several of the churches of England hour-glass stands of elegant workmanship are still to be seen." But none of the curiosities now named are so remarkable as signs of the times, as the velvet and silken cushions and carpets with which pulpits were decorated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially—as we are compelled to say, though with regret,—those of the High Evangelical School. We might say a good deal more on these eccentric subjects, but as our object is only to shew how they must have affected the preachers subjected to their influence, and must do so now, as far as they exist, we will leave them to the chroniclers of such Church curiosities.

But the surroundings of the pulpit, as well as the pulpit itself, must often greatly affect the mind and spirit of a preacher. As the pulpit, in its normal form, may be compared to the cell of a cloistered monk, so the pews of most churches remind the spectator of pens for cattle, the only difference being that they are made, by adornments which money can buy, to be appropriate to the fashionable and well-to-do classes of the community, and we feel certain that if a preacher were placed for the first time in a normal pulpit and set up on high in the midst of galleries and high pews, his first associations would be anything but those which a high class Christian feeling would wish them to be. Our ideas of Christian preachers and Christian oratory, from early childhood, have been formed

from the historical pictures of the New Testament, and from their graphic delineation by great painters. But what reasonable affinity can there be between St. Paul preaching at Lystra or Athens, with erect and unencumbered form and earnest gestures, and a Doctor of Divinity locked in a modern rostrum, and luxuriously reclining on velvet cushions, with his conventional sermon-book with its embroidered cross lying before him.

We are happy in knowing that in our Church there is an under-current of good taste and right feeling—generally very modest, indeed, but always ready to assert itself when there is a prospect of doing so successfully,—which, if it should come to the full, would sweep away all the ridiculous church arrangements we have just mentioned, and place the preacher free as the air in the presence of his expectant audience, to mould and fashion them under the direction of the Great Spirit whom he professes to follow as his guide. An instance of this appreciation of what is proper, in opposition to what is conventional, is now before us in the little essay of Mr. Walter, M.P., and we are glad to find in it opinions closely corresponding with our own on the subject of the material pulpit. After urging the clergy to cultivate the habit of speaking, instead of reading, their sermons, Mr. Walter proceeds: “I fear that our pulpits themselves have something to answer for in this matter, and that no great improvement in pulpit oratory is likely to take place till they are altered. I will not go so far as to say what I once heard an American preacher say, that ‘pulpits were the invention of

the devil ;' but the fact, thus roughly expressed, is that to be cabin'd, cribbed, confined in a wooden or stone box a few feet above the ground, with a brass bookstand in front, and a pair of candlesticks on each side, is not the most favourable position for giving that full expression to the impulses of the soul which the attitude of a preacher towards his hearer requires. For delivering a set of lectures on some theological dogma, or even for a bare exposition of Scripture, a pulpit, or even a chair, may suffice ; but when speaking to the souls of men, it seems to me that the whole person of the preacher should be visible to his congregation, or the effect must be that of a bust speaking, rather than a full-length figure. A clergyman told me the other day that the pulpit in his church being under repair, they rigged up a platform on the top of the pews, and that he found it a far more comfortable position for preaching."

We are able to speak with some authority on this whole subject, from circumstances which we will briefly relate. Twenty years ago we entered upon the charge of a large agricultural parish, with a fine old church of the fifteenth century, and at this date with a large congregation, and in other respects a desirable sphere of pastoral labour ; but we confess to feeling when we first entered the church a sense of depression came over us, from seeing how sedulously the parish authorities had robbed the building of its comely proportions by filling it with galleries and high pews, making it appear, when without the congregation, "a beggarly account of empty boxes." The pulpit had the same

character, and the other adjuncts were like those described above. We can affirm, with truth, that for twelve years of this period we never preached a sermon with the satisfaction which we ought to have had, for although we eschewed the moth-eaten cushions, and declined the service of the vergers in walking behind us up the pulpit steps and closing the door, the sight of the congregation, with its neglect of Christian kindness and its frequent proud selfishness, made us always sensible that it was more Christian in name than reality, and caused us to desire to be allowed to imitate our Master with a "scourge of small thongs." We were at length permitted to execute our best wishes in this respect, when, six years ago the church was restored, and every remnant of exclusiveness, pulpit, galleries, and pews together were swept away, a beautiful stone pulpit, without a door, of course, taking the place of the bird-cage structure which before hung against the wall. As the free system has been carried out in the most perfect manner—not a single seat being appropriated, either to the lord of the manor, the vicar's family, or the churchwardens,—and the people by common consent, with some few exceptions, sitting promiscuously throughout the whole area, an immense burden was removed from us in the performance of our duty, and we were no longer pained, while preaching, by seeing those proofs of hard-heartedness which were before so plentifully supplied. Still the pulpit remained, with all the inconveniences stated by Mr. Walter, until more recently we gave it up altogether, and have since preached from the prayer desk under the

south side of the chancel arch. Here we stand with nothing before us, making as it were one of the congregation, with a freedom and comfort, and a sense of sympathy with the people which must be felt before it can adequately be described. We shall not have written this volume in vain if this chapter of it should stimulate some of the clergy to follow our example. But we well know, from painful experience, that the "pew" superstition clings very closely to the hearts, not only of ignorant and common people, but of many who are educated and refined, and that rather than be disturbed in these hereditary "holdings," Churchmen will tolerate any amount of exclusiveness toward their fellow-parishioners, and of the disfigurement of beautiful architecture. An especial impulse of Divine grace is necessary to free our Church from this and many similar prejudices.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### PULPIT ALLEGIANCE TO HOLY SCRIPTURE.

IN the introduction to this volume we attached very great importance to a thorough knowledge of the contents of the Bible to one called to minister in the Church of England,—a knowledge demanded not only by the promises made at Ordination, but by the religious character and feeling proper to that holy office. We return to the subject now from a deep conviction that, on all the topics hitherto discussed the right impetus and the right balance will be sustained by the clergy just in proportion as a conscientious and heartfelt devotion to “God’s Word written” is cultivated by them. And as this is the paramount duty of everyone who takes upon himself to preach the Word, so it will be to him, in proportion as he possesses it, the source of his comfort and the measure of his success. Our object will now be to give to our brethren, as the result of our own long study and experience, some assistance in their efforts to become skilled in the knowledge of the original Scriptures, and well versed in the varied and most interesting literature associated with the attainment.

We think we are correct in the opinion that the ability to read the Hebrew Bible and the Greek New Testament with pleasure and profit is not a common attainment, though we hope the greater

part of the clergy can consult those ancient documents with sufficient skill to give them some reasonable certainty that when they preach from a text they give the real meaning of the inspired writer, at least with that degree of moral certainty which the nature of the inquiry admits of. And this is no slight attainment, and might be held to satisfy the more urgent demands of conscience when time and means have been wanting in youth and early manhood for the acquisition of a thorough acquaintance with the Sacred Originals. But what we wish now to insist upon is, that it cannot be considered too late for a clergyman to aspire to the skill we desiderate up to middle age, though the ruggedness of the path of knowledge will certainly be more keenly felt as such an advanced period is approached. But we will suppose this case is an extreme one, and that a clergyman determines to be a competent Hebraist and Hellenist at the time he receives Priests' Orders, and what advice have we to give him, by way of stimulus, in this laudable project?

Those who are able with ourselves to go back half a century in their literary and learned reminiscences, and during that period have become familiar with all the phases of the progress of Biblical science and literature, will often feel astonished when they compare the means possessed at present of acquiring these noble attainments with those offered to us in our youth, so immense is the distance between the poverty and scantiness of the one, and the affluence of the other. Hebrew Bibles, in the second or third decade of the present



century were all foreign ones, and only to be had in the antique typographical form which was generally itself repulsive enough to add considerably to the difficulties of the tyro, the beautiful octavo volumes of Van Der Hooght, printed in the former century, and the elegant miniature edition of Bagster's *Polyglot*, being exceptions to the reign of ugliness. There were, it is true, some small Hebrew Bibles, or portions of them, produced at Continental presses, but they were regarded more as literary curiosities than as helps to the study of Hebrew, in some cases the points being left out, and in all of them the types being too small to be used with safety by ordinary eyesight. Then the appliances for learning the language were equally rude and meagre, the only Hebrew grammar presented to English students in their own language being that of Yates, which was simply a collection of paradigms, and we knew a student, who became, afterwards, a well-known Hebrew scholar, who mastered the first difficulties of the language by means of a ninepenny Hebrew grammar published in the series of Pinnock's Catechisms. As to Lexicons, at the period we are speaking of, England possessed only, in its own language, the ingenious one of the eccentric Parkhurst, which proceeded on the unpointed system, and beguiled the student, weary of his self-conducted labour, by his continual descants on Hutchinsonianism. Those who avoided this system of becoming possessed of Hebrew roots had to use Buxtorf's *Lexicon*, which, being written in Latin of the driest scholastic kind, added to the natural difficulties of the acquisition of Hebrew knowledge.

It will be confessed by our readers that the picture we have now given them is dreary enough, and yet by these means alone many Hebrew scholars were made both at the Universities and Dissenting academies. But what a marvellous revolution had taken place in all appliances for learning Hebrew before the end of the next twenty years! Hebrew Bibles, large and clear in type, proceeded from English presses at a very moderate price, especially the addition of Van Der Hooght, reproduced on superior paper under the editorship of Judah D'Allemand; the *Lexicon* and *Grammar* of Gesenius came forth in several convenient forms and in English translations, while grammars in English gave all possible advantages to the aspiring student. This is a congenial topic to us, but we must not pursue it, and will only add the practical reflection, that if it was possible, fifty years ago, for a young Englishman to lay the foundation of sound Hebrew scholarship, the comparative ease of doing so in the present day must be greatly increased. And in addition to all we have said it must not be forgotten that scarcely any aid was given to students by University professors and tutors, some of whose chairs were merely nominal, so few men professing a desire to become their pupils.

Coming to the Greek Testament we must conjoin with it the Septuagint version, which, for all practical purposes, can be studied with it, the same learned apparatus being demanded for both books. For the study of these—the Greek Testament especially—abundant means have never been wanting since the revival of learning, though, as in the case

of Hebrew literature, the present century has been most rich in its supply of materials. Critical editions of the New Testament have by this time furnished all that is probably attainable for the formation of a text most conformable to the Divine original, and an undergraduate can now carry about with him not only the text itself, in a type easily readable, but also all the chief readings which the libraries of the world have supplied since the invention of printing. There can now be no excuse, on the score of scarcity or price of these aids to sacred learning, for the young clergy being without their aid in their studies. Grammars of the New Testament dialect, or, as it is more properly called, the Hellenistic, have also been supplied in German and English. Critical and Exegetical Commentaries on the Hebrew text have yet to be supplied by the advancing learning of our times, but on the Greek New Testament they are abundant enough. We need only mention a few in an advancing series of skill and completeness, without doing more than touching the confines of the subject, namely, those of Valpy, Bloomfield, Alford, and Meyer, of which last a translation in English has just been put forth in an elegant form by the Messrs. Clark, of Edinburgh. A translation of Bengel in English may be noticed in this connection.

Of Lexicons to the New Testament there has been as abundant a supply as of critical editions, some concise, and others diffuse; but we can now make mention only of one which, for many reasons, we regard as standing at the head of its class, and which has long been to ourselves in the place of a

whole library of information, Lexicographical and Exegetical. It is that of John Frederick Schleusner, who was born at Leipzig, 1756, and became Professor of Theology at Göttingen, 1790. He was the author of a *Lexicon to the Septuagint*, and the remains of other Greek versions, including those of the Apocryphal books. This was published in three octavo volumes, and now stands unrivalled in its department. But the *Magnum Opus* of this truly learned and indefatigable scholar is his *Novum Lexicon Græco-Latinum in Novum Testamentum* which, like the above work, was first published in all the ugliness of old German typography, but was reprinted in 1817, at the expense of the University of Glasgow, in two volumes octavo, and afterwards in one volume quarto, a beautiful book, in every way worthy of its learned contents. One peculiarity of this work is that in almost every case it gives the Greek word which it explains, in sufficient connection with the sentence where it is found, to perform the part of a commentary which, though necessarily brief, is singularly lucid and satisfactory. The Lexicon also answers the purpose of a Concordance, giving almost every instance in which the word explained occurs in the New Testament. We would strongly advise all young clergymen to try to secure a copy of this Lexicon, which, we fear, is never likely to be reprinted, not at least for use in this country, on account of the recent decline of Latin as the language of the schools, and the custom of now publishing Greek Lexicons in English.

We must not omit to refer to that noble monu-

ment of Hebrew learning and exquisitely finished typography, Fuerst's *Hebrew Concordance*, which was published by Tauchnitz, of Leipsic, in 1840. It is a folio volume, combining with the Concordance, a Hebrew Lexicon, displaying much genius and research, intended to exhibit the author's theory of the close connection between the Sanscrit and Hebrew languages. This Lexicon, with its profound learning, will only be used by advanced Hebrew students, while the Concordance will give important assistance to all who make any pretensions to read the Hebrew Bible with facility.

We think we have now furnished the newly-ordained deacon or priest of our Church with a sufficient apparatus to enable him to commence, with all earnestness, that measure of study of the sacred texts of the Old and New Testaments which we have advocated in our introduction as being necessary to meet the claims of the Ordination Service, and furnish our Church with "workmen who need not to be ashamed," and who can "rightly divide the word of truth." The pulpit allegiance to Holy Scripture which this chapter recommends and enforces, is, of course, quite consistent with many degrees of study of the Hebrew and Greek Originals, for the success to be attained will be regulated by natural ability, and the time which can be devoted to the work. But if a sense of the importance of the subject is entertained, and the student is conscious that he is doing what he can to accomplish his purpose, conscience will be satisfied, and the preacher, when he ascends the pulpit, will feel that the

previous preparation of the study gives him confidence that he can ask for the Divine blessing and the aid of that Holy Spirit by whom, at his Ordination, he professed to be guided. Should he not, however, feel that he is able so thoroughly to master what we may term Biblical science, as we have presumed he may do, and we recommend him to try to do, there are other appliances which we will now describe, both in justice to those who have furnished them, and to those who are conscious of desiring to accomplish all that is in their power. Some years ago, but within the *renaissance* period we have been writing upon, there appeared the *Englishman's Hebrew Concordance* as a guide to the study of the Old Testament, and the *Englishman's Greek Concordance*, intended to supply the same assistance to the Greek Testament, both of which will furnish essential aid to the student. But more recently two works have appeared as the result of immense literary labour and a large pecuniary outlay which we feel it our duty to bring under the notice of our readers. The one which relates more especially to the Hebrew has a descriptive title which we will give in full; it is as follows:—

*The Englishman's Bible ; combining in one the Englishman's Hebrew Bible and the English-Greek Testament ; designed to put the Reader in possession of some of the Precisions, Beauties, and Hidden Treasures in the Hebrew and Greek Originals of the Sacred Scriptures ; and to keep them before the eye of the Biblical Student. By Thomas Newberry, editor of The New Testament, with*

*Analysis, Notes, and Emphatic Readings.* The way in which this comprehensive design is carried out can only be fully known from an inspection of the work itself. But we shall allow the author to give the general explanation of his preface:—

“*The Englishman’s Bible* is intended to supply a lack and a need, and is designed for all who are acquainted with the English tongue, whether they are familiar with the original languages or not.

“Its object is, as far as possible, to put the English reader in the position, and to give him the advantages, of a Hebrew and Greek scholar, and at the same time, to assist those who know the Hebrew and Greek by keeping the precisions and certainties of those languages ever before the eye.

“When the original Scriptures are in the study, and the ordinary Bible is in constant use, the benefit of knowing the originals is in a large measure lost. The object of this work is to unite both in one, and to stamp the accuracy and certainty of the originals on the page of the Authorized Version.

“This precision and certainty is sought to be shown as to the—1, Articles.—2, Numbers.—3, Emphatic Pronouns.—4, Tenses.—5, Particles or Prepositions.—6, Uniform and Correct Renderings.—7, Divine Titles and other Particulars.”

As want of sight quite precludes us from examining the work in its intricate mechanical arrangements, we are glad to be able to quote the opinion of so competent a scholar as Dr. Payne Smith, the Dean of Canterbury, who, in a letter to Mr. Newberry, says:—

"Your *Englishman's Hebrew Bible* has filled me with astonishment at the amount of patient labour and exact study necessary for producing such a work.

"It will, I think, enable the English reader thoroughly to understand the original, and place him in a position as near as possible to that of a Hebrew scholar.

"I have examined your work in various places, and find it executed with the utmost accuracy."

The other work, which concerns the Greek Testament only, comes recommended to our notice by bearing the venerated name of Bullinger, from whom the author is directly descended, a Reformer who stood so high in Biblical literature and theology that Archbishop Whitgift obtained an order, in full Convocation, that every clergyman should procure a copy of his sermons and read one of them once a week. A curious coincidence with the fact now before our readers, that one of his name and lineage offers important assistance to the English clergy, three hundred years afterwards, in their Biblical studies, and is brought under their notice in this treatise on the *Art of Preaching*. The title of Mr. Bullinger's work is: *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament, together with an Index of Greek Words, and Several Appendices*: by the Rev. Ethelbert W. Bullinger, Vicar of St. Stephen's, Walthamstow. This monument of patient literary labour and competent Biblical scholarship was introduced to the Church Congress at Croydon, in 1877, by Professor Plumptre, who, when speaking of con-



cordances, said: "I do not mean English concordances, those, of course, are simply misleading, but such a book as the *Englishman's Hebrew Concordance*, or that very admirable and elaborate *English-Greek Concordance to the New Testament*, just published by Mr. Bullinger; these, honestly studied and used, will lead the student of the Word of God to a more enlarged apprehension of its meaning than the mere gathering together of what other gleaners in the great harvest have brought home rejoicing to their own garners."

What we have already said in this chapter will assist the younger clergy to decide for themselves whether they shall grapple with the difficulties of acquiring a scholar-like knowledge of Hebrew and of Hellenistic Greek so as to read the Holy Scriptures in the original tongues easily, or be satisfied with the more superficial, though valuable acquaintance with them which is offered by these publications. For ourselves, we think nothing can make up for the want of ability to read Hebrew with sufficient facility to make its records intelligible; but this is a matter on which we cannot give a decision. These works will, at all events, be of the greatest service to all who have the time and perseverance necessary for using them. We cannot help again contrasting the abundance of the materials now existing to enable the clergy to become Biblical scholars, with their scanty and inaccessible character fifty years ago. We will add only one observation more on this point; for the learning of dead languages expert teachers will not be required, as the niceties of pronunciation and other minute

particulars can be dispensed with, and one who has mastered the difficulties of a good classical education will easily overcome those of the Hebrew Bible, while those of the Greek Testament will scarcely exist. What is to be aimed at is the acquisition of a power to read both with sufficient fluency to employ them for devotional purposes, or, at least, to catch their general sense *ad aperturam libri*.

We might fill many pages more if we were only to notice the salient points of the subject we have thus briefly discussed. But we must now turn to BIBLICAL LITERATURE, a department of learning far more extensive than that of Biblical science, though relatively of less importance. The Literature of the Holy Scriptures comprehends all that has been written about them, and it has been divided into many compartments; but we shall now only mention three, the Textual, the Critical, and the Exegetical. The first will contain all that has been written and printed respecting the Original Texts and their Versions, and printed Editions; the second concerns the Original Manuscripts, their history and various readings; while the third comprehends the whole domain of Interpretation and Commentary. Until we come to investigate the matter closely, for practical purposes, no one could conceive the vast extent of the field thus opened to human enquiry, or its multifarious ramifications, and our end will be sufficiently secured if we point the young preacher to some of the sources where any required information may be found. A great deal of this miscellaneous literary matter has been

produced on the Continent, more so than in England, though our own clergy have contributed very much to the common stock, and those who are acquainted with the German and French languages will have the key to unlock immense stores of literary riches, far beyond the limited opportunities for research possessed by the ordinary parish priest. But the ability to read Latin with ease will prove the most compendious guide to the whole subject before us, as will become evident to any one who will consult the very full Bibliographical indexes of the Introduction of the late Rev. Thomas Hartwell Horne, a work which, after more than half a century of eminent usefulness, still maintains its position as a full and sufficient guide to the Biblical student, and a new edition of which has been lately published.

But a vast service has been rendered to Biblical students by the publication of Bible Cyclopædias and Dictionaries, of which several appeared within the last thirty years. Of these we shall only mention two :—1, *A Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, by John Kitto, D.D., F.S.A., third edition, edited by William Lindsay Alexander, D.D., F.S.A.S., and assisted by numerous contributors, in three volumes, with Biographical Notices and General Index: 1876. This work is in royal octavo, and contains between two and three thousand pages, with numerous maps and engravings. 2, *A Dictionary of the Bible, comprising its Antiquities, Biography, Geography, and Natural History*, edited by William Smith, LL.D., in three volumes. Our edition is dated 1863, but there are

more recent ones. The size of this work is medium octavo, and it contains more than two thousand pages, with numerous illustrations. These two works differ somewhat in general character, the first giving more attention to Rabbinical literature. The two works together will form a complete library for a parish priest on all the Biblical topics which will ordinarily demand his attention.

More recently there has appeared a work of reference on a smaller scale, but of great value and utility: *The Englishman's Critical and Expository Bible Cyclopædia*, compiled and written by the Rev. A. R. Fausset, M.A., Rector of St. Cuthbert's, York. The account which the author himself gives of the contents and scope of this volume shall be here quoted by us :

“The aim of this work is to put within the reach of all Bible students, learned and unlearned alike, the fruits of modern criticism and research, and at the same time to set forth, briefly and suggestively, those doctrinal and experimental truths which the Written Word itself contains.

“The researches of the Palestine Exploration Fund have thrown fresh light on many obscure questions of sacred topography and history. Besides, in an age prone to scepticism, God has given remarkable confirmations of the truth of His own Word in raising men who have been enabled to decipher the hieroglyphics of Egypt, the cuneiform inscriptions of Babylon and Assyria, and the archaic characters of the Moabite stone. The discoveries thus made, in so far as they elucidate the sacred volume, have been embodied in this *Cyclo-*

*pædia*. At the same time the commentators, ancient and modern, English and German, have been carefully consulted, and the results given, in respect to difficult passages."

The book is a quarto volume, and contains 2259 closely printed columns.

In the slight sketch contained in this chapter we have said nothing about Polyglots, nor shall we now enter upon the subject, as it concerns a more advanced grade of Biblical study than we are now considering. But the Prolegomena to Walton's Polyglot is a work so extremely interesting and valuable that we must say a few words about it. A new edition of it was edited, in 1828, by Archdeacon Wrangham, who added valuable notes of his own. Walton treats of all the ancient versions, and the work contains beside a large mass of information relating to various readings and kindred matters. The style of the Latin is most easy and pleasing, and as the book can be readily procured at a low price, we advise those of our readers to procure it who wish to pursue such studies. As they may meet with them, they will no doubt procure for their more advanced studies the Hebrew Bible of Kennicott for the sake of its various readings, and also the Greek Testaments of Mill, Wetstein, Griesbach, and Lachman, for the same important purposes.

We hope we shall not be thought to have wandered too far from our main purpose in this slight sketch of Biblical science and literature. The great importance we attach to a preacher of our Church being a Biblical scholar we have laid before our

readers in our earlier pages, and we hope it will prove that we have rendered sufficient assistance to give the younger clergy an impetus in the prosecution of such important studies. To very many such aid will not be needed, but we believe that many others will receive what we have offered with gratitude, and be able, by means of it, to compose their sermons with the confidence inspired by the conviction that they have not failed in their allegiance to Holy Scripture, and, as a consequence, have paid due honour to the Holy Spirit by whom all Holy Scripture is inspired.

The Westminster Revisers of the Authorised Version of the New Testament have just concluded their labours, and the results will shortly be submitted to the nation, and when public criticism has brought the revision into a permanent form it will become, we presume, the Authorised Standard, and take the place of the old one. There will then be presented to the clergy a new field of operations, and, according to their acquirement or their tastes, they may comment upon the new readings which the revisers have recommended. When the charges of sameness and dullness are so often brought against the sermons of some of the clergy, it will be an advantage, in some cases, to have this new element of thought introduced.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE PERORATION—PULPIT ENTHUSIASM.

As every speech must have a beginning and an ending there must, of necessity, be an Exordium and a Peroration. But while both these parts of a discourse, whether sacred or profane, may have little significance, they may, on the other hand, be raised, by the art of the orator, into portions of his speech of even more importance than the substance of his undertaking. An exordium may make statements and pursue a line of reasoning which shall compel the assent of an audience to the conclusion aimed at, even before the pleadings and arguments have been heard, while, on the contrary, a peroration may be so effectively managed, and the feelings of the hearers so powerfully wrought upon, that all that has been previously advanced may be neutralized, so that an opposite conclusion shall be arrived at.

But while a peroration in an oratorical effort may be a work of art, it is, as a rule, a matter of but little importance, and in the ordinary course of public life does but little to sway the minds of those whom the speech is intended to affect. This may be said to be the case with by far the greater part of the sermons delivered every Sunday by the ministers of our Church, and, as a rule, as a sermon draws near to its close the congregation is rather

preparing with alacrity to return to their home than to make a mental effort to receive the impressions of "thoughts that breathe and words that burn" about to be earnestly urged upon it by the pulpit orator. This, however, ought not to be the case, and every preacher who prepares a sermon for a Sunday audience, however small or illiterate, should have a distinct intention of gaining the assent and affecting the will of his hearers.

If we regard the matter in this light, this last chapter of our work on the *Art of Preaching* may easily become the most important of the whole series, and as far as our ability extends we will endeavour to make it so. It should be distinctly recognised by every one who ascends a pulpit, or takes his stand on the less ostentatious elevation which we have described elsewhere, that the sermon itself and all its relations and issues are among the most solemn matters to which the mind can be directed. If the preacher, when arranging the materials of his discourse, remembers that he is, by his own solemn profession, called by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel, he cannot, in any sense, become a trifler, nor can he remember that he stands up in the name of a Divine Master, for whom he is an ambassador, to negotiate with his hearers the mighty affairs of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," and to "pray them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God," without being deeply moved by the immense importance of his message, and doing all that lies in his power to bring the minds and hearts of his hearers into harmony with such deeply interesting topics. A peroration, in



these circumstances, will be, of necessity, the concentration of all he has said on the subject he is treating of, so that in whatever way or degree the hearer has been moved by the body of the discourse, the impression should be deepened at the conclusion.

When descending from the high theme of what a peroration may be—and should be, if Divine things, which are the subjects of our ministry, exerted their full influence—to what a peroration ordinarily is, in the common-place productions of Sunday life, we are conscious of perpetrating a *bathos* which is not pleasant to contemplate. But may we not indulge a hope that the way in which we are now treating this topic may produce salutary results, by leading to a more adequate recognition of what a sermon should be, for if it is admitted that its conclusion should be impressive and striking, it will be at once felt that its substance should not be destitute of those qualities. We will, therefore, recommend that both the exordium and the peroration should have special attention, and be deliberately worked out beforehand. Not, indeed, in every instance, for there are occasions in which any formal conclusion of a discourse may be avoided; some of the best sermons may proceed on the principle of continued application, and, in that case, any very special impression at the close can hardly be looked for. But, in ordinary cases, when a doctrine, or precept, or an event in the Divine government is intended to bear on the welfare of the people, the preacher should gather together in one the main lines of his argument, and make them bear with increased emphasis on his audience.

While a peroration should be decided upon beforehand as to its main features, it is the part of a sermon in which an extemporaneous preacher may allow himself to become more discursive, according as his own feelings are moved, or as he sees that those of his audience are melted and prepared to receive impressions. Unless an orator is himself impressed, both by what he has advanced and the object at which he aims, he cannot expect the inspiration of the moment to produce new and impressive thoughts and sentences: and if, towards the end of his discourse, he is conscious that his thoughts have been desultory, and his language without earnestness and warmth, he had better conclude in a similar strain rather than risk the appearance of being artificial. We confess that what we now say on this subject is rather tentative than hopeful of any specific result, except in some few instances. But if what we have advanced on the peroration of a sermon has anything of truth in it, we prayerfully hope it may fructify, and in connection with all of seriousness which we have advanced in this volume, may tend, by the Divine blessing, to increase the number of efficient preachers.

But while the word peroration is technically appropriated almost solely to public speaking or to the art of the orator, it is, in the nature of things, applicable to every mental production, whether a dissertation, a history, an essay, or a poem; and we shall take advantage of this wide definition to address to our readers a peroration on all we have written in this volume, on all we have laid before them in the thirty-five chapters of which

this treatise on the *Art of Preaching and the Composition of Sermons* consists. We cannot review our past anxious labour without admitting the somewhat sad reflection that the often dry and technical subjects which we have discussed, and the prosaic unimpassioned advices which we have given, do not rise sufficiently to "the height of the grand argument" which concerns the message of God to man, the love of God in giving His Son, and the coming of the Son of Man to die for us, with all the concomitant themes of evil, of sin, of regeneration, of discipline by the aid of the Holy Spirit, of death, judgment, and eternity, and of everlasting happiness or its opposite!

In the essay which forms the introduction to this work we have alluded to the various obstacles which stand in the way of a young clergyman when he addresses himself to the work of preparing sermons for his parishioners; and it might be supposed that the advancing course of ministerial life would diminish these impediments, with the result that, at mature age, they should be eliminated altogether, so that the priest in the temple might plead with man, and "justify the ways of God" with an eloquence commensurate with the immense value of such topics, aiming solely at the glory of God, the present religious happiness and the final salvation of the hearers. But if we examine the facts of the case as they more usually come before us, we find that no such heartfelt advancement can be recognized, or that a higher platform of pastoral earnestness and of congregational sympathy is presented as the result of homiletical

efforts. Can the cause of this failure, this manifest discrepancy between the abundant means and the inadequate results, be ascertained by any mental analysis which the case admits of, or must it be classed along with the many mysterious accompaniments of the Gospel system which is brought to light for our welfare by our Lord Jesus Christ? There is no necessity to admit the latter alternative, for we think the words we have employed at the head of this chapter—"Pulpit Enthusiasm"—sufficiently unlock and explain the difficulty. We have holy men in abundance who preach the Word, who always preach sensibly, and we have also abundance of pleasing and eloquent speakers who evidently make it the object of their life to do the work of ambassadors for Christ; but we find, on closer examination, that they are wanting in the element of enthusiasm in most of their public efforts. Even the correctness of language, the fluency of utterance, the lucid arrangement, and the utmost earnestness of the address of the speaker may all be destitute of the quality which we are desiderating, a quality which, in the place of a formal definition, we will endeavour to illustrate by examples.

If we may venture to speak of our Lord in the same category in which we place some of his distinguished disciples, we may say that He exhibited enthusiasm when he wept over Jerusalem, combining with his tears the impassioned ejaculation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee!" And in the same sense St. Paul was an enthusiast when he

said of some of the Philippians, "Of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." In both these illustrious cases the springs of the deepest emotions were unlocked, and the words proceeded from the recesses of the heart itself. Such instances of an enthusiastic appreciation of the wants and sorrows of mankind and their dangers, are, indeed, abundantly furnished in our day by preachers, and by published sermons; but they generally stand separate and alone, and not as integral portions of sermons of the same texture throughout, so as to be evidently reasonings and appeals proceeding from the very mind and soul of him who utters them. The fact is that the enthusiasm we mean is a quality inherent in the very nature of the speaker, not occasionally called forth or dependent on accidental surrounding circumstances. It is like the glow of an eastern sky in the early dawn, which intimately affects everything it touches, and, to descend to a very inferior subject, which will yet answer our purpose, it corresponds to the *couleur de rose* which conveys to the imagination so much more than it expresses. Let our readers earnestly meditate on that affecting passage in the twentieth chapter of the Acts, describing the parting of St. Paul from the elders of Ephesus, and we think they will be conscious with ourselves that the spirit of the devoted apostle is that which is needed to make our sermons all that they can be wished to be, and that even if tears welling up from the heart were often shed while the preacher was handling the elevated topics of his ministry they would be by no means out of place.

After all that can be written on the subject in the way of apology or extenuation, the confession must be made that the sentiments and emotions of the whole visible Church are on too low a level to allow of that enthusiasm in the preacher which should be adapted to generate enthusiasm in the hearers; and while the whole revelation of the Gospel of Christ seems to be undervalued and misunderstood, when not seen in the light of this heartfelt enthusiasm, the minor interests of public and social and private life will bring down enthusiasm to a minimum, and in most cases will eliminate it from pulpit performances altogether.

The decay of FAITH in the Church as an efficient revealer of things hoped for and things unseen, must be acknowledged by every one who is not suffering from judicial blindness, and it will be equally acknowledged that the clergy, as well as their flocks, are affected by the obscuration. Let us have more of the light within, and that light will shine before men,—our example combining with our exhortations to glorify our Father who is in heaven.

The intimate connection between our appreciation of the man who is our teacher and guide, and the doctrines which he presents to our notice, cannot be too much remembered by us, and we should always bear in mind that, unless we are enthusiastic ourselves, all our efforts to inspire the quality in others will be but failures. This fact is so forcibly stated by the Rev. Professor Wace in his recent Bampton Lectures that we must quote a passage in confirmation of what we have just advanced :—

“The weight and force of all testimony to a

supernatural religion must greatly depend on the degree in which the witness is felt to be in harmony with our deepest moral convictions. No miracle would be adequate to convince a man that St. Paul brought a direct message from God unless he were sensible that, by means of that revelation, and in conjunction with it, the apostle was appealing to his conscience and pouring a new illumination upon his soul. 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' If a man be not overwhelmed by the spiritual illumination of the Scriptures; if his whole nature be not stirred to its inmost recesses by a Psalm like the 139th; if he does not tremble before the heights and depths of spiritual realities there revealed to him, even the miracle of Easter Day may fail to afford a sufficient answer to his doubts. In proportion as this moral and spiritual sensibility is dormant the faith of even professed Christians is but notional and traditional, and is destitute of real life and stability. A prophet or an apostle who announces a revelation from God, and who claims our submission to it, appeals to us for trust; and that trust must depend, not merely upon the miracles he may be able to work, but also upon the moral authority he weilds; while this, again, will depend not only upon the witness's moral depth and insight, but upon our own also. If we are spiritually enfeebled we shall be incapable of appreciating his authority, and shall be insensible to the force with which he appeals to us."\*

\* *The Foundations of Faith.* The Bampton Lectures for 1879. By Henry Wace, M.A., Chaplain of Lincoln's Inn, and

Writers of the sceptical school have lately advocated the theory that the religion of the New Testament, as developed in the Gospels and Epistles, is unfitted for the present social and intellectual position of Christendom, especially of our own country. We do not wonder at any one, who reasons only by the logic of facts, adopting this view of the case, for there certainly cannot exist a much greater discrepancy than is now seen between New Testament doctrine and practice, and that exhibited by the practice of society around us. The Christians of the New Testament made their worship of Christ and their obedience to His commands the chief objects of their existence, while religious society of our day make them the inferior one, if not the lowest of all. Religion may be fashionable in its exterior practices, it may be æsthetic in a high degree, and may contribute largely of its substance for various good objects, both public and private, while at the same time it is evidently destitute of that enthusiastic reception which would make its disciples proud of it, lead them to talk of it in public and private as the grand object of their lives, and be willing to sacrifice everything for its honour and advancement; and yet, strange to say, this cool indifference to the value of Christianity

Professor of Ecclesiastical History in King's College, London. Lecture III, page 76-77. We earnestly recommend these highly suggestive lectures to the attention of the clergy, especially to those of them who are in any way disturbed by the subtle and sophistical arguments of recently-developed scepticism, and those whom such arguments do not disturb will find its reasonings most valuable in endeavouring to fortify those who are weak in faith.



cannot be said to be justified by the counterbalancing happiness with which a neglect of it is accompanied; or, in other words, a life of ordinary worldliness, of money-getting and pleasure-seeking, does not ennoble and make happy those who follow it. The contrast we are speaking of is thus eloquently described in the Bampton Lectures just quoted :—

“ The evidence that this new spiritual power had been introduced into the world is conspicuous in the records of the early Church, and is especially to be discerned in one marked characteristic of Christian life. That characteristic is the intense joy, hope, and enthusiasm by which it is animated. All around us is a disappointed world—a world of disappointed valour, disappointed justice, disappointed virtue, a world in which suicide had come to be looked upon as a natural and a reasonable resource ; but in the midst of it the martyrs and confessors, the humblest Christians and the most distinguished, alike display all the energy of hope, of love, and of the complete satisfaction of their hearts. . . . It has been a commonplace of worldly writers to compare—as one of their modern representatives has expressed it—‘ the languors of virtue ’ with ‘ the raptures of vice,’ and it is possible that moralists have sometimes given occasion for the comparison. But the great truth of Christian morals is that the contrast must be exactly reversed ; and, as a matter of history, especially in the first three centuries, it was so reversed. In that period the languors are all on the side of vice, and the raptures all on the side of virtue. They are so still,

in the experience of every one who surrenders himself to the full influence of the Gospel; but the sudden and overwhelming force with which this experience is displayed in Christian life, after our Lord's Ascension, is one of the keys to Church history. Perfect love has cast out fear. The Christian soul breathes in an atmosphere of light, and grace, and peace, and truth. It is not merely hoping for ultimate salvation. It is living in the light; all things have become new to it in the spirit, and it is assured that they will hereafter become new to it in the body." (p. 151.)

Now if this decadence of Christian enthusiasm in our day is a fact which cannot be disputed, it cannot be out of place to ask, Are the clergy similarly affected by the spirit of the times? We fear it must, on the whole, be answered that the subsidence has drawn down with it the public teachers of religion, who are often not to be distinguished, except by a clerical habit and some peculiar conventional duties, from the respectable mass of society around them, and what, we think, should be aimed at by us is the elevation of the whole body to the higher level of Apostolic times.

With these forcible words we will conclude our peroration, and leave the results of our efforts to aid our brethren in the hands of Him to whom the preaching of His Gospel is of the highest interest in the administration of His spiritual kingdom. May we all live under the daily remembrance and the daily appropriation to ourselves of St. Paul's noble declaration :—

“NOW THEN WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, AS THOUGH GOD DID BESEECH YOU BY US : WE PRAY YOU IN CHRIST’S STEAD, BE YE RECONCILED TO GOD.”

May the Divine Spirit who moved, at the beginning, upon the surface of the waters, and was adumbrated by the Wind which moved the dry bones as seen by Ezekiel, come, in answer to the prayers of the Church, and accomplish all that the most earnest piety can desire ! May the Spirit promised by our Lord to His Church, and especially to His ministers in the most solemn hour of His earthly trial, and given on the day of Pentecost as an earnest of His new-creating power to the end of the world, be more and more diffused among us to make us preach with an intellectual ardour, and to listen with a soul-felt anxiety to profit to the largest possible extent. And these petitions for the aid of the Holy Ghost must be closely associated in our minds with the solemn declaration of our clergy at their Ordination, that they believe they are moved by that Divine Person to take upon themselves the office of the ministry ; for we cannot avoid the conclusion that nothing more is wanted to keep alive a holy enthusiasm than an assurance in the soul of the preacher, that he is acting under the eye of Heaven, and may depend on heavenly aid.

**A Minister's Prayer on a Sabbath  
Morning.**

DEAR IS THE DAY THIS MORNING USHERS IN,  
A DAY OF PRAISE AND PRAYER ;  
OH ! BE THE EFFORT MINE THOSE HEARTS TO WIN,  
WHO AT THIS MOMENT ARE THE SLAVES OF SIN,  
AND THUS THE JOY OF ANGELS I SHALL SHARE.

OH, COULD I HOPE ONE SPIRIT'S LOVE TO GAIN  
FOR HIM WHO LEFT THE DEAD,  
AND NOW AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND FORGETS HIS PAIN,  
WHOSE LOVE TO SOULS AS ARDENT DOTH REMAIN  
AS WHEN ON CALVARY FOR SOULS HE BLED !

THY SAINTS TO CHEER, THEIR TREMBLING HOPE TO RAISE,  
I TRUST HAS OFT BEEN MINE ;  
BUT WHILE THE RANSOMED SING THY LOFTY PRAISE,  
OH, LET THE WANDERER WEEP O'ER OTHER DAYS,  
AND VOW, IN SILENCE, EVER TO BE THINE !

## The Commission.

“AND JESUS SPAKE UNTO THEM, SAYING, ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH.

GO YE, THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST:

TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD. AMEN.”

*St. Matthew xxviii. 18, 19, 20.*

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